

**THE NOVELS OF
BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON**

Edited by EDMUND GOSSE

Fcap. 8vo, cloth

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Abraham's Hair, & A Painful Memory

In God's Way (2 vols.)

The Heritage of the Kurts (2 vols.)

LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

21 Bedford Street, W.C.

IN GOD'S WAY

A NOVEL

BY

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSEN

Translated from the Norwegian by

ELIZABETH CARMICHAEL

VOLUME I

LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1906

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

ON Björnson's return to Norway from Paris, he settled down at his country estate of Aulestad, in Gudbrandsdal. Here he composed another long novel, which he completed in the summer of 1889, and which was published in Copenhagen towards the end of that year, under the title of *På guds veje* ("In God's Way").

This novel was at once perceived to be among the best things that Björnson had composed, and to be superior in point of art and arrangement to any of his previous romances. While it was perfectly original in subject and treatment, the author's residence among the French had evidently given him a new lightness and sureness of touch. As, in the case of "The Heritage of the Kurts," some readers had complained of the excess of pedagogy, so in that of "In God's Way" there were some who objected to the insistence on medical detail, and the language of the sick-room, which gave a clinical character to the later sections of the book. Some one said that the last chapters "simply stink of antiseptics." But to say this was to misconceive Björnson's grave and sympathetic purpose, which was to display the hand of God, moving in a mysterious way, and guiding His children through the most perilous paths of manifold human suffering.

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This divine guidance is interfered with and frustrated in the course of the narrative by all manner of foolish and vain contrivances of man's invention, taking forms of fanatical intolerance and disturbing the sweet and innocent movements of human instinct. It was at once seen that Björnson was recurring in "In God's Way" to that attack upon social hypocrisy and religious persecution which he had made ten years before in his notorious drama of *Leonarda*. But time had ripened his views, and the novel is a much sounder and more valuable contribution to modern thought than the play which had raised so great a tempest in 1879.

The landscapes in this romance are among the most admirable which Björnson has painted. The story opens on the shores of the Atlantic, somewhere near the mouths of the great western fjords; it continues in the neighbourhood of Christiania or on the eastern frontier; and the final scenes are laid in the very heart of the country, deep in those almost impenetrable pine-forests which create in the far north a silence which seems to have been unbroken since the foundation of the world. All these, and other characteristically Norwegian scenes, are so picturesquely and so faithfully depicted in the course of this novel, that it would hardly be possible to point to another book which reveals in so faithful a manner and in so various a degree the very body and soul of Norway.

E. G. .

Author's Dedication

TO MY BEST FRIEND
ETATSRÅD FREDERIK HEGEL
IN REMEMBRANCE

THOU never hast been here yet I roam
Often up and down and meet thee every where.
Here is no room nor road
But thoughts of thee stand forth
Awaiting me from by gone days
When thou by deeds of faithful friendship
Brought comfort to my home in all its troubles

And oftimes, as I wrote this book
Thy kindly eye would beam on me
We were alone then, thou and I, and
All that silently grew into words—
Here and there the book must needs
Be like thy heart, thy simple faith,
And therefore may thy name impart a blessing unto it.

AULESTAD, *September 11, 1889.*

SCHOOL-DAYS

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I

IN the melting snow on the hill-side by the sea, in the last rays of the evening sun, stood a boy of fourteen, awestruck. He looked toward the west, out across the sea, he looked toward the east, over town and shore and the broad hills ; in the background still higher peaks rose far away in the clear sky.

The storm had lasted a long time ; it had been more terrible, too, than any the old people could remember. In spite of the new dyke, many ships had been driven ashore, and many had sunk. The telegraph brought news of wrecks all along the coast, and close by here the herring-nets had been broken and washed away, oars and anchors had disappeared ; it was even feared that the worst was not yet known.

It was but a few hours since a calm had set in, the storm had abated, the gusts of wind ceased, all was over—all except the last low grumbings of the storm.

But the sea was rebellious ; it does not do to stir up the deep and then run away. Far off in

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the distance great sea-waves, higher than houses, came rolling up in endless lines with foam-white crest and a crashing fall; the dull, heavy thud was heard across the town and shore; it was like a piece of land slipping away down into space.

Each time the waves at full height stormed the mountain, the spray was dashed up to a monstrous height; from afar it seemed as though the great white sea-monsters of the old legends were trying to land just at that very spot. But a few salt splashes were all that reached the top; they stung the boy's cheek as he stood there motionless.

As a rule it was only the very worst westerly storms that could dash the spray so high; but now it had reached the top though the air was so calm. No one but he had ever seen such a sight.

Away in the far west, sky and sea seemed melting into one in the glow of the setting sun. It was like some golden realm of peace; and all the deep sea-waves, with their white crests rolling up from as far as the eye could reach, were like banished rebels; they came crowding onward, protesting, million-mouthed.

The contrast of colouring was now at its height; no more blending of lights and shades, not even a red shimmer made its way across. *There* was a rich, warm glow, *here* a cold, blue-black lay over the sea and snowy coast; all that could be seen of the town from the hill-side dwindled away and seemed to grow less and less every time the boy turned to look inland. But each time he looked he felt himself grow more restless and uneasy; surely that was a bad sign; could more be going

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to happen? His imagination was startled, and, tired as he was from want of sleep, he had no strength to fight against this fear.

The splendour of the sky was disappearing, all the colour gradually fading away. The roar from down below, where the sea-monsters were trying to climb, grew louder and louder; or was it he who heard it more plainly?

Was this meant for him? What in the world had he been doing? Or was he going to do something wrong? Once before the same vague fear had proved to be a bad omen.

It was not the storm alone that had frightened him; a short time ago a lay preacher had prophesied that the end of the world was at hand; all the signs of the Bible had come to pass, and the prophecies of Jeremiah and Daniel were clearly to be understood. It made such a sensation that the papers took up the matter and announced that the same thing had been foretold so very often before, and those prophecies of Jeremiah and Daniel were always suited to the occasion. But when the hurricane came, and was fiercer and more terrible than any that could be remembered; when ships loosed from their moorings were driven up against the wharf, crushed themselves and crushing others, and especially when night came on and shrouded everything in darkness and no lantern even could keep alight, . . . the crashing fall of the waves was heard but not seen, shouts of command, screamings and great lamentations; and in the streets such terror, roofs were lifted right off, houses shook, windows rattled,

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stones hurled about, and the distant screams of those trying to escape only added to the fright, . . . then, indeed, were many who remembered the words of the preacher ; God help and save us, surely the last day has come and the stars are about to fall. The children especially were frightened to death. The parents had not time to stay with them , though the last day of the world had come, still there was a doubt as to whether it really were the last day, and from sheer force of habit it was thought wiser to look well after all worldly goods, so they saved what they could, and put up bolts and bars, and ran to look to the fires, and were busy everywhere. But to the children they gave prayer-books and psalm-books, and told them to read what was written about earthquakes and other plagues, and about the day of judgment ; hurriedly they found the places for them, and then ran and left them. As if the children could read then ! *

Some there were who went to bed and pulled the bedclothes over their heads ; some took their dog or cat with them—it was company for them, and they would die together. But it happened sometimes that neither dog nor cat chose to die under the bedclothes, so then there was a fight.

The boy who now stood up on the top of the hill had been absolutely crazy with fear. But he was one of those whom fright drove about from place to place—out of the house into the street, from the street down to the harbour, and then back home again. No less than three times had his father been after him, caught him and locked

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him in, but he always managed to get out again. Now this was not the sort of thing that could have been done with impunity in an ordinary way, for no boy was kept more strictly or got such abundance of thrashings as Edward Kallem; but the one benefit the storm brought was that there were no blows that night.

The night passed away, and the stars still shone clear until day dawned once more, and the sun was as bright as ever; the storm died away and with it all remains of fear.

But once one has been influenced by anything so terrifying there will ever after be, as it were, a dread of the actual terror. Not only by night in evil dreams, but by day when one fancies one's self safest, it lurks in our imagination, ready to seize hold of us at the smallest provocation, and devouring us with cunning eyes and bated breath drives us sometimes to madness.

• As the lad stood there he began to feel afraid of the deepening twilight and the roar of the sea; and all at once a terrible fear came upon him, and all the horrors of the last day began afresh. How could he have been so foolish as to venture up there, and *alone*, too! He stood like one paralysed, he dare not move one foot forward, it might be noticed, and he was surrounded by enemies. He whispered a prayer to his dead mother that if this really were the last day, and the resurrection set her free, she would come to him up there and stay with him; not with his sister, for she had the headmaster of the school to take care of her; but he was quite alone.

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But all remained as before. Only toward the west it grew lighter, but darker toward the east; the cold grew more intense and reigned supreme; but there was a comforting feeling in the more equal size and monotony of all around. By degrees he regained courage, and began to breathe more freely—timidly at first, then a long-drawn breath several times; he began then to touch himself all over very gently and cautiously, half afraid that those invisible powers which were looking out for him might suspect some evil. Softly he crept away from the edge of the precipice and drew nearer to the downward path. He was not going to run away, oh dear no! He was not even sure that he would go down; he might just try; certainly he would gladly come again. But the descent just here was dangerous, and really ought to be got over before dark, and at this time of year it got dark so very quickly. If he could manage to climb down to the path that led across the mountain from the fishing village down below, then there would be no danger; but up here—well, he would go carefully, cautiously one little step forward, then another quite tiny little step. It was just a trial; he would be sure to come again.

No sooner had he in this way clambered down the steepest and most dangerous part of the descent, and stood where he felt himself protected from those invisible powers he had been so anxiously capitulating with, than he set to work to cheat them most thoroughly; down he fled, leaping and jumping, bounding like an India-

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rubber ball from one piece of rock to another, till suddenly he saw a pointed cap sticking up so far down below him that he could only just distinguish it. In an instant he came to a dead stop ! His terror and flight, all he had just gone through vanished ; not a shadow of it remained. Now it was his turn to frighten others ; and here came the very boy he had been waiting for all the time. His excitement, his eyes, his whole eager attitude showed how he delighted in the knowledge that the other was coming within range.* How he would give it him !

The other boy came climbing upward, little suspecting the danger that awaited him ; slowly he jogged along as if enjoying his liberty and solitude : soon his heavy boots were heard with their iron heels clanking against the stones.

A well-built lad he was, tall and fair, a year or so older than the one awaiting him. He wore coarse cloth clothes, and a woollen scarf around his neck ; his hands were encased in thick, knitted gloves ; he carried one of the little wooden boxes generally used by the peasants ; it was painted blue, with white and yellow roses.

A great mystery was now going to be revealed. For many days the whole school had been waiting, wondering with whom, and how and where this meeting would take place, and when the important moment would arrive when Ole Tuft, confronted by one of the school's most solemn police force would be obliged to confess where he went to, and what he did in the afternoons and evenings.

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Ole Tuft was the son and only child of a well-to-do peasant along the coast. His father, who had been dead now a year, had been one of the most popular lay preachers in all the West country, and had early determined that his son should be a clergyman, that was why he went to the town-school. Ole was clever, industrious, and so respectful to the masters that he soon was a favourite with them all.

But no one can know a dog by his coat only. This most respectful and simple lad began to disappear from the playground in the afternoons; he was not at home (he lived with his aunt, his father's sister), and he was not at the Schultzes, where he used to help two of the children with their lessons—he always did that directly after dinner; neither was he at the head-master's, which was the same as being with the master's adopted daughter, Josephine Kallem, Edward's sister; Ole and she were always so much together. Sometimes the other lads would see him go in there, but never come out again, and yet they always found Josephine alone when they went in to look for him; for they posted out sentinels, and the whole search was carried on most methodically. They could track him as far as to the school-yard but no farther—surely he could not have disappeared into the earth? They ransacked the yard from one end to the other, every corner, every hiding-place was visited over and over again; Josephine herself went about with the boys and took them even up to the cock-loft, down into the cellar, and into every

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room where none of the family were sitting, assuring them, on her word of honour, that he was not there; but they could look for themselves. Where in all the world was he then?

It so happened that the *dux* of the school had just won in a lottery "*Les trois Mousquetaires*," by Alexandre Dumas the elder, a splendid book, with illustrations; but as he soon discovered it was not the kind of book for so learned a man as he, he offered it as a reward to that one of his school-fellows who could find out where Ole Tuft went to, and what he did in the afternoons and evenings. This seemed a very enticing offer to Edward Kallem; he had always lived in Spain until about a year ago; he could read French just as well as Norwegian, and he had heard that "*Les trois Mousquetaires*" was the most splendid novel in the world. And now he stood sentinel for "*Les trois Mousquetaires*." Hurrah for all the three! now they would be his.

Down he crept softly, softly, until he reached the path; the culprit was close at hand.

There was something about Edward Kallem's head that made one think of a bird of prey. The nose was like a beak; the eyes wild looking, partly from their expression and partly because they had a slight squint. His forehead was sharp and short, the light-brown hair closely cropped around it. There was an extraordinary mobility about him which made one feel that he was very agile. He was standing still, but he bent his body forward, shifted his feet and raised

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his arms as though the next moment he would throw himself into the air.

"Boo-oo!" shouted he with all the strength of his lungs. How he started the boy who was climbing up—he nearly dropped his box. "Now I have got you! It's all up with your secret now!"

Ole Tuft was like one turned to stone.

"So there you are! Ha, ha! What have you got in the box?" And he rushed at him; but the other one quickly changed his box from right to left hand, and held it behind him; it was impossible for Edward to get hold of it. "What are you thinking of, lad? Do you fancy you can escape? Give up the box!"

"No, you shan't have it!"

"What! you won't obey? Then I'll just go down and ask."

"No; oh no!"

"Indeed but I will though."

"No, you won't?"

"Yes, I shall!" And he pushed past and tried to go down.

"I'll tell all, if only you'll not tell again."

"Not tell again? Are you out of your senses?"

"Oh, but you must not tell!"

"What a ridiculous idea! Give me the box or I'm away down to ask!" shouted he.

"Well, you'll not tell about it?" And Ole's eyes filled with tears.

"I won't promise."

"Don't tell, Edward!"

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"I tell you I won't promise. Out with the box ; look sharp !"

"Indeed it's nothing wrong. Do you hear, Edward ?"

"Then if it's nothing wrong, I suppose you can give it me. Come, be quick !"

Boylike, Ole took this as a sort of half promise ; he looked imploringly at him and began hesitatingly : " I go down there to—to—oh, you know—to walk in the ways of God." This last was said very timidly and he burst into tears.

"In the ways of God?" repeated Edward, half uneasily but highly astonished.

Then he remembered that once in a very drowsy geography class, the master had asked, "What are the best kind of roads or ways?" The answer in the lesson-book was, "The best way for the exportation of wares is by sea."

"Well," repeated the master, "what ways are the best? Answer, you, Tuft!"

"The ways of God," answered Tuft. In an instant the whole class was wide awake, a roar of laughter gave evidence of it.

But for all that Edward Kallem did not really know the true meaning of "God's ways." Ole down in the fishing village, and walking in the ways of God! From sheer curiosity he forgot that he was a member of the moral police force, and blurted out, just like any other school-boy, "I don't understand what you mean, Ole ; walking in the ways of God, did you say?"

Ole noticed the change at once ; those wild-

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looking eyes were friendly again, but still had that strange light which indeed never left them. Edward Kallem was the one of all his school-fellows whom Ole secretly admired the most. The peasant boy suffered much from the town boys' superior brightness and sharpness, and both these qualities were very much to the fore in Edward Kallem. And besides, there was as it were a halo round his head—he was his brown-haired sister's brother.

He had one unbearable fault, he was a fearful tease. He often got a beating for it from the master or his father, or his companions, but a moment after he would begin again. This sort of courage was beyond the peasant boy's comprehension. Therefore a friendly word or smile from Edward had a greater effect than it was really worth; it had about it a sunny glow of gracious condescension. This coaxing, kindly questioning, coming from the bird of prey (though its beak only was visible), together with the bright, shining eyes, made Ole give in. As soon as Edward changed his tactics and asked innocently to be allowed to look at the box he gave it up, and felt so safe and at his ease that he dried his eyes with his big gloves, took off the one glove and blew his nose, then remembering that some one had given him a checked pocket-handkerchief for that purpose, he looked for it in his pockets but could not find it.

Edward had unfastened the lid of the box; before he raised it he looked up, saying, "May I?"

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"Yes, you may."

Edward put the lid on one side and took off a handkerchief, under which lay a large book; it was a Bible. He felt rather small, almost awed. Underneath the Bible lay several unbound books; he took up a few of them, turned them over and put them back again; they were religious tracts. He laid down the Bible again carefully, just as he had found it, spread the handkerchief over it, and shut the lid. In reality he was not a bit wiser than before, but he was more curious.

"You surely don't read the Bible to the people down there?" asked he.

Ole Tuft blushed. "Yes, I do, sometimes, and then——"

"Who do you read to?"

"Oh, to the sick, but it is not often I can get so far."

"Do you go and visit the sick?"

"Yes, it is just the sick I do visit."

"The sick? What can you do for them?"

"Oh, I help them as well as I can."

"You?" repeated Edward, with all the astonishment he was capable of. After a pause he went on. "But how do you help them? Do you take food to them?"

"Sometimes I do. I help them whenever they need it; I change the straw under them."

"Change the straw?"

"Why, yes, they lie upon straw, and then, don't you see, they would lie on there, no matter how dirty it got, for they are ill and cannot help themselves, and often in the daytime they are left

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quite alone when every one is out at work and the children are at school. So when I come in the afternoon, I go first to the boats just in from along the coast with straw, and there I buy what I need and carry it up and then take away the old straw."

"But, my dear fellow, have you got money to buy it with?" asked Edward.

"My aunt collects money for me, and so does Josephine too."

"Josephine!" exclaimed the brother.

"Yes; oh, but perhaps I ought not to have told."

"Who does Josephine get money from?" asked Edward, with all an elder brother's aroused curiosity.

Ole bethought himself a moment, then answered decidedly and clearly: "From your father."

"From father?"

Edward knew quite well that even though it were Josephine who asked their father for money, he would never give it for any useless purpose; he always liked to know what it was wanted for. Therefore his father must approve of what Ole did, and that took away all doubt from Edward's mind. Ole could feel how entirely he changed his view of the matter; he could see it, too, in his eyes. He longed to tell him more about it all, and he did so. He explained how, often when he went there, there was hard work for him to do; he was obliged to light the fire and cook for them.

"Can you cook?"

"Of course I can, and clean up too, and buy all

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that is needed, and send a messenger rowing across to the apothecary; for the doctor may have written a prescription, but no one ever thinks of sending it over."

"And have you time to do all this?"

"Directly after dinner I finish work at the Schultzes, and I learn my own lessons at night."

And he talked on, telling all there was to tell, until he, too, remembered that they ought to get down from the mountain before dark.

Edward walked on in front, deep in thought; the other followed after with his box.

There, on the slope of the hill, they could hear the roaring of the waves as if in the air; it was like the low murmur of a distant crowd, but high above their heads. They felt it getting very cold; the moon was up, but no stars were to be seen; yes, one solitary one peeped forth.

"And what made you think of doing this?" asked Edward, turning round.

Ole stood still too. He moved his box backward and forward from one hand to the other; should he make a bold venture and tell all?

Edward understood at once that he had not heard everything, and that what remained to be told was the most important part of all.

"Can't you tell me?" he asked, as though it was quite immaterial.

"Yes, I think I can;" but he kept on changing his box from hand to hand without saying a word.

Then Edward became impatient and began

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trying to persuade him, to which Ole had no objections, but still he hesitated.

"Surely it is nothing wicked?"

"No, it is not wicked." And he added after a pause, "It is rather something grand, very grand and great."

"Really something great?"

"In reality the grandest thing in all the world."

"But what can you mean?"

"Well, then, if only you will not tell, not to a living soul—do you hear?—I might tell you."

"What is it, Ole?"

"I am going to be a missionary."

"A missionary?"

"Yes, a missionary among the heathen, the regular savages, don't you know, those who eat people." He saw that Edward was almost speechless; so he made haste to tell him all sorts of things about cyclones, raging wild beasts, and poisonous snakes. "You see one requires to be prepared for such things."

"How prepared—for raging wild beasts and poisonous snakes?" Edward began to think everything possible.

"The people are the worst," said Ole, who had to give in about the wild beasts; they are such dreadful heathens, and cruel and ugly and wicked into the bargain. So it will not be so easy to manage them. One must have practice."

"But how can you get practice in that sort of thing here? They are not heathens down in the fishing village?"

"No, but they can teach one how how to bear

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a little of everything ; there is no use complaining down there, but just be ready to do all sorts of hard work. They are often so suspicious when they are ill and fretful, and some of them are downright brutes. Just fancy, one evening one of them was going to hit me."

"Hit you?"

"I prayed to God that she would, but she only cursed and swore." Ole's eyes glistened, his whole face was beaming. "In one of the tracts I have in my box it says that that is the mistake of our missionaries, they go out to their work without having any practice or experience. And it says, too, that the art of winning people is a very difficult one, but hardest of all it is to win them for the kingdom of God, and that we ought to strive to do it from our childhood upward ; that is what the book says, and I mean to do it. For to be a missionary is higher and greater than anything upon earth ; greater than to be king, greater than to be emperor or pope. That is all in the tract, and this, too, that a missionary said : 'If I had ten lives, I would give them all to the mission.' And I mean to do the same."

They were walking side by side ; unconsciously Ole had turned to the stars as they began to twinkle, and they both stood still awhile gazing into space. Beneath them lay the harbour with its dimly outlined ships, the silent, empty wharfs, and the scattered lights from the town ; beyond was the shore, grey with snow and the dark sea-waves rolling up ; they could hear the sound again, faintly in the distance, the monotony of

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the roar seemed in keeping with the star-spangled twilight. An invisible wave of sympathy passed between the lads, and seemed to link them together. There was no one Ole was so anxious should think well of him as his friend here with his jaunty fur cap; while Edward was thinking all the time how much better Ole was than he; for he knew quite well that he was far from good, and indeed he was told of it every day. He glanced sideways at the peasant boy. The peaked cap was pulled down over his ears, the big gloves, the thick scarf, the coarse cloth jacket, and trousers hanging loosely on him; the heavy, iron-bound boots—a curious figure—but his eyes alone made up for it all. And then the innocent, trusting expression, though it was rather an old-fashioned face. . . . Ole would decidedly be a great man some day.

They trotted on again, Edward in front, Ole after him, down toward the "hill-town," as that part was called which lay nearest the hill-side, and which consisted chiefly of workmen's houses, a few workshops, and some smaller factories. As yet the streets were neither properly paved nor lighted, and now the muddy snow was stiffening into ice as night came on. The lanterns, few and far between, hung in the middle of the streets, on ropes stretched across from opposite houses; they were made to be hoisted up and down. They had been badly cleaned and burned dimly. Here and there one of the small workshops had its own private lantern, which was hung up outside on the steps. Edward stopped again under

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one of these ; he felt he must ask more questions. He wanted to know more particularly who it was Ole went to see among the fisher people—whether it was any one they both knew.

Ole boldly put down his box on the steps, and stood there resting his hand on it ; he smiled. " Do you know Martha from the docks ? " The whole town knew her ; she was a clever woman, but much given to drink, and on Saturday evenings the school-boys always had great fun with her, when she stood leaning up against a wall, abusing them roundly with gestures not of the most refined, in fact, quite unmentionable. This, however, was just what the boys were waiting for, and was invariably received with shouts of delight.

" What ! Dock Martha ? " shrieked Edward. " Do you suppose you can convert her ? "

" Hush ! hush ! For goodness' sake, not so loud," implored Ole, reddening and looking anxiously round.

Edward repeated, in a whisper : " Do you think any one could ever convert Martha ? "

" I believe I am on the high road to do so," whispered the other, mysteriously.

" Come, you won't get me to believe that," and he smiled with squinting eyes.

" Just you wait and hear. You know she fell on the ice this winter and was badly hurt ? "

" Yes, I know that."

" Well, she is still laid up, and now every one is tired of helping her, for she is so cross and so wicked. At first she was very disagreeable to me ; I could hardly bear it ; but I took no notice,

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and now it is nothing but 'my little angel,' and 'my lamb,' and 'my pigeon,' and 'dear child;' for I have taken care of her, and got clothes and food for her, and bedclothes too, and have done much for her that was not at all pleasant; that I have. And yet it was she who wanted to beat me the other evening. I was going to help her up, and somehow she managed to hurt her bad foot. She shrieked with pain and lifted her stick, but then she thought better of it, and began to curse and abuse me dreadfully. Now we are good friends again, and the other day I ventured to read the Bible to her."

"What! to Martha?"

"Yes, the Sermon on the Mount, and she cried, lad."

"She cried? Then did she understand it?"

"No, for she cried so that she could not have heard much of it. But I don't think she cried on account of what was in the Bible, for she began as soon as ever I took it out."

The two boys stood looking at each other; a noise of hammering was heard over from the backyard, and in the far distance a steam-whistle; then the faint cry of a child from across the street.

"Did she say anything?"

"She said she felt much too miserable to listen to anything. So I explained that it was just the most wretched and miserable whom God wanted. But she seemed not to hear that at all. She only begged me to go away, and to go round and see if Lars the washerman had come home."

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"Lars the washerman!" cried Edward so loud that again Ole had to check him; Lars was the woman's sweetheart.

"Yes, just fancy his being fond of that creature But they all say there is a great deal of good in Lars. He goes there every evening to see what he can do for her. This evening he came earlier than usual, so I got away; but generally I stay there much longer."

"Have you read to her more than once?"

"Yes, to-day I did. She began to cry at once, but I do think she heard me to-day; for I read about the Prodigal Son, and she said: 'I expect I am one of his swine.'" Both the lads laughed. "Then I spoke to her and said I could not believe that, and that I would try and pray. 'Oh,' said she, 'there's not much use in that;' but when I began to say 'Our Father,' she became perfectly crazy, just as though she were frightened, and sat up in bed crying out that she would not hear another word, not for anything. Then she lay down again and sobbed most bitterly."

"So you never said your prayer after all?"

"No, for then Lars came in, and she told me to go. But you see, it did some good. Don't you think I am on the right way?"

Edward was not sure about it. It was clear that his admiration had received a blow. Soon after they separated.

SOMETIMES in the higher class of schools there reigns a spirit utterly opposed to that prevalent in the town where the school is ; and it is even a rule that in certain matters the school exists under its own independent influence. One single master can often keep the pupils to his own way of thinking, just as it may depend on one or several of the boys whether there is a chivalrous spirit among them or the opposite, a spirit of obedience or one of rebellion ; as a rule there is one who leads them all. It is the same, too, as regards morality ; the boys become what they are according to the example set before them, and oftenest it is one or more of themselves who have the power to set this example.

Just at this time it was Anders Hegge, the *dux* of the school, who took the lead in everything. He was the cleverest and best-read boy the school had seen since its foundation ; he was to stay there a year longer than was necessary, so as to lend to the school the glory of a certain double first. The other boys were tremendously proud of him ; they told admiring tales of how he had been known to catch the masters at fault,

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that he could choose what lessons he liked, and could come and go whenever he pleased ; he did his lessons, too, mostly alone. He had a library, the shelves of which had long since covered the walls and now stood out upon the floor ; there was one long shelf on each side of the sofa ; it was so much talked about that the smaller boys were allowed to go up and look at it all. And there, in the middle, in front of the window, sat he smoking, in a long loose dressing-gown, a present from a married sister, a velvet cap with gold tassel, a present from an aunt (his mother's sister), and embroidered slippers, from another aunt (his father's sister). He was quite a ladies' man, lived with his mother, who was a widow, and five elderly female relatives paid for his books and his clothes, and gave him pocket-money.

He was a tall, stout fellow, with marked, regular features, showing descent from a good old family ; the face would have been good-looking enough, but his eyes were too prominent and had something at once greedy and inquiring about them. It was the same with his well-made figure ; the effect would have been good but that he stooped so much, just as if his back were too heavy for him, and his walk was uneven. His hands and feet were neat, he was dainty and particular, and his tastes in general were effeminate.

He never forgot anything that had, once been told him, important or not it made no difference ; except, perhaps, he considered the trifling things of most importance. Few things escaped him ;

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he had a quiet way of gaining the confidence of others, it was quite an art. He knew the history of all the great families in the whole country and in foreign countries as well; his greatest delight in life was to repeat these stories, especially when they were scandalous ones; and to sit listening greedily for new ones. If the masters had only known how the air of the school was infected and corrupted by this much-admired piece of goods, with the contents of its secret drawers, they would hardly have kept him there another year; the whole school was critical and doubting, full of slander and mean efforts to curry favour, and infected by slanderous stories.

Ever eager for news, he was always to be found in his smoking-gear, sitting among his books, and was there, too, when Edward came in that evening to tell him that he knew now where Ole went to and what he did with himself; so now he expected to get the reward! Anders got up and begged him to wait till he fetched some beer that they might enjoy themselves together.

The first glass was most delicious, a second little half-glass equally so, but not till then did Edward tell his news—how Ole went to nurse the sick down in the fishing village.

Anders felt almost as small as Edward had done when he saw Ole's Bible in his box; Edward laughed heartily at him. But very soon Anders began to insinuate doubts; he suggested that Ole had invented all that so as to screen himself; there must be something more under it all; peasant boys, he said, were always so cun-

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ning, and to prove it he began telling some rather good stories from school. Edward did not at all relish this everlasting doubting, and to cut the matter short (for he was very tired) he informed the other that his father knew and approved of it, and even helped Ole with money. Of course when he heard that, Anders could doubt no longer ; and yet there might be more under it, peasant boys were so very sly.

But this was too much for Edward ; he started up from his seat and asked if he thought any of them told lies ?

Anders sipped his beer quite calmly, rolling his prominent eyes cautiously around. "Lie" was a strange word to use ; might he be allowed to ask who were the sick people Ole went to see ?

Edward was not prepared for this ; he had intended to tell as much as would justify his getting the reward, but not a word more. He got up from his seat again. If Anders wouldn't believe him, he might leave it alone, but he meant to have the reward.

Now it was not Anders Hegg's way to quarrel with any one, and Edward knew that well. Of course he would give Edward the book, but first he must just listen to such a funny story about the sick people down in the fishing village. The parish doctor and his wife had been to see his mother yesterday, and some one had asked after Martha from the docks, who had not been seen for so long, whether she was still laid up from her fall in the winter ? Yes, she was still laid up, but she was not in any want, for, strange

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to say, people sent her all she needed, and Lars brought in brandy to her every evening, and they had many a merry carouse together. She would probably not be up again for some time to come.

Edward got very red, and Anders noticed it directly ; he suggested that perhaps Martha was one of those whom Ole visited.

Yes she was.

His prominent eyes widened at this piece of news. Edward saw with what eagerness he gulped it down and it made him feel as if he had been devoured and swallowed up himself. But if there is a thing that school-boys cannot stand it is to be thought too confiding and innocent ; he hastened to free himself from the most insulting insinuation that he was not able to see through Ole Tuft and his stupid ways ; only fancy, he actually read the Bible to Martha !

He read the Bible to her ? Again those prominent eyes opened and greedily drank it in, but he closed them at once, and was seized with laughter ; he regularly shouted with laughter—and Edward with him.

. Yes, he read the Bible to Martha, he read to her about the Prodigal Son, and then Edward repeated all that Martha had said. They laughed in chorus and drank up the rest of the beer. All that was pleasant and amusing in Anders showed itself when he laughed, although his laugh had a grating sound down in the throat ; still it incited one to more fun, more mischief. So Edward had to tell all, and a little more than all.

As he ran home later with the grand book

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under his arm, he had a kind of disgusted feeling. The effects of the beer were over, he was no longer tempted to laugh, and his wounded pride was satisfied ; but Ole's trusting eyes seemed to meet him everywhere, as soon as he got out in the air. He tried to put it from him, he was so dreadfully tired ; he would think no more about it this evening ; but to-morrow—to-morrow he would ask Anders not to speak about it.

But the next morning he overslept himself. He hurried on his clothes and rushed off, eating his bread-and-butter as he went along, and giving a rapid thought to "Les trois Mousquetaires, now his precious property ; he longed for the afternoon to be able to read it. In school he stumbled through his lessons one by one, for he had learned nothing, and on Saturdays there was always so much. He worked on until two hours before the school closed ; there was still to be French and Natural History, but to neither of these classes did he belong—so away he flew downstairs before any of the others.

Just as he stood outside the school gates he saw Anders coming from the opposite side ; he was going now to take his lesson in the upper class. Edward thought at once of the preceding day, and he felt anxious as to what Anders might take it into his head to tell ; but at that very moment he caught sight of a monster steamer, a wreck, coming slowly in between the two piers, and all the people running by said there had never been so large a ship in the harbour before. She dragged along, hardly able to move, her

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masts gone, bulwarks all damaged, and the propped-up funnel all white with salt water up to the very top; was that another steamer towing her? Edward could not make out for the pier. Every one was running that way; he ran too!

Meanwhile Anders turned in at the school gate. Just as he opened it a class was over, and all the boys rushed down the stairs as through a long funnel, and out into the yard; it was a storm in a wizard's belly, the very house shook; first came one short, sharp yell, the first-comer's shout of delight; then a screaming of mingled voices high and low, some cracked and breaking ones toning down the whole; then a mighty shout from all together like a sea of fire shooting up to the sky, then half-quenched on one side, but flaring up again on the other, then uniting in a broad glow over the whole yard.

Anders whistled softly as he came along; it was not like being in a sea of fire; it was like sailing through dangerous rocks and reefs, tossed about and dashed from one side, and tossed and dashed back again to the other; but he had an object in view; he would try cautiously to reach the stack of wood over by the neighbour's paling; there all was quiet, and he could partially screen his body up among the wood.

When he had reached this point of vantage and had looked cautiously round to see if it was safe, he gazed down on the crowd with delight; he felt a pleasurable satisfaction in knowing that he could quiet this uproar just with three or four words which he would whisper in the ear of his

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nearest neighbour. They would act like oil upon a raging sea, and the noise would cease as those few words were spread about.

Where was Ole ? There he was, he and a big boy together ; they had hold of each other by the collar and were tumbling about ; the bigger of the two was trying to knock down the other, using his feet freely for many a kick. Ole's heavy boots swung round, the iron heels shining in the air ; he shouted with laughter as his companion grew fiercer and wilder, but could not get him down.

Then Anders bent his head down to the boy who stood nearest him :

"Now I know what Ole Tuft does in the evenings !"

"Oh, rubbish !"

"But I do know."

"Who found it out ?"

"Edward Kallem."

"Edward Kallem ? And has he got the book ?" asked the other hurriedly.

"Of course he has."

"No, really ? So Edward Kallem has——!"

"Edward Kallem ? What about him ?" put in a third, and the one who had just heard the news repeated the story. A fourth boy, a fifth, a sixth, all rushed away, crying out : "Edward Kallem has won the prize, lads ! Anders Hegge knows what Ole Tuft does in the evenings." Wherever they went the noise stopped instantaneously ; all of them wanted to hear the news, and rushed across to Anders Hegge.

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Hardly had a fourth part of them reached him before the remaining three-fourths, losing interest in their games, followed suit. What in all the world was the matter over by the wood-stack? why were they all running there? They crowded round Anders, and climbed up on the wood as many of them as could find room. "What's the matter?" "Edward Kallem has won the prize." "Edward Kallem?" And the noise began again, every one asking, every one answering—all except Ole Tuft, who remained standing just where his companion had left him.

There was a dead silence as Anders Hegge told the story; and he had a right to tell it, for he had paid for it. He told it well, in a short, dry sort of way that gave an air of double meaning to everything; he told them first where Ole went to and what he did; how he changed the straw in Martha's bed, moved and lifted her, cooked for her, and fetched medicine for her from the apothecary. Then he told them *why* Ole did all this; he wished to be a missionary, and was practising for it down at Martha's; he read the Bible to her and made her cry; then, as soon as Ole had gone, Lars, the washerman, came in with the brandy bottle, and he and Martha had a grand carouse together on the top of the Bible reading.

At first the boys stood as quiet as mice; they had never heard the like before. They looked upon it as a sort of game, and from the way it had been told it could hardly be understood otherwise; but never before had they heard of anyone playing at being missionary and Bible-

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reader ; it was funny, but it was something else besides—something they could not quite make out. As nobody laughed, Anders continued. And what made Ole do all this ? Because he was ambitious and wanted to become an apostle, which was more than to be either king, emperor, or pope ; Ole had told Edward Kallem that himself. But, in order to become an apostle, he had to find out "God's ways," and those ways began down at Martha's ; there he meant to learn how to work miracles, to wrestle with the heathen and the wild beasts and poisonous snakes, and to calm a cyclone. Then there was a roar. But just at that moment the school-bell rang, and shouting with laughter, the boys had only time to run past Ole back to their lessons again.

Once before in his young life had Ole Tuft gazed down into a bottomless abyss. It was on a winter's day, as he stood by his father's grave and heard the dull sound of the frozen earth falling upon the coffin ; the air was thick with driving mist, and the sea was black as pitch. Whenever he was in trouble his thoughts flew back to that day ; and now it seemed as if he were standing there again, and heard the mournful church bells toll. Just as the noise on the stairs and along the passages had ceased, the last stray loiterer gone in, the last door been shut—complete quiet suddenly—then, through this empty silence, he heard a bell, ding-dong, and in fancy saw himself at the little pine-wood church by the shore. How they creaked and rustled in the wind, those long-armed, leafless

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birches by the wall, and the ancient fir-tree at the gate; the clanging of the bells, harsh and shrill, floating in the air, and the dull thud of the earth on the coffin, made a life-long impression on him; and his mother's ceaseless weeping—she had kept it all back until now, had made no sound, neither by the sick man's bedside, nor even when he was carried away in his coffin; but now, suddenly, the tears gushed forth—ah, so bitterly . . . O father, mother! Mother, father! And he, too, burst into tears.

This was sufficient reason for his not following the other boys in; he would never go back to school again. He could not face any of them after what had happened, he would have to leave the town; in a couple of hours it would be known everywhere; they would all be asking questions, and staring and laughing at him. And now, too, all his hopes and intentions for the future had been profaned; what was the use of studying any more; nor would he go to any other town, only home, home, home.

But if he stood there much longer one of them would be sent down to fetch him; he ought to get away at once. But not home to his aunt, or he would have to tell her everything; and not out by the big gates and down the principal street, for there were so many people who would see how he was crying. No, he must make his way to the little hiding-place that Josephine had made for him, and through which she helped him out every afternoon, so that the other boys might not see him.

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The wood-stacks stood next to the neighbour's paling ; but to the right leaned up against a shed into which Ole went. He loosened two boards in the wall nearest the wood-stack, crept through, and closed them behind him. This performance could not have been carried out if there had not been on the other side an open space, made by an impediment of nature, in the shape of a large stone, taller than the boy, but which stood at a little distance from the wall. If the stone had not been there, the two stacks of wood would have touched each other and barred the way ; but as it was, there was plenty of room at both ends of the stone as well as on the top of it. The children had made themselves little rooms here one on each side of the stone. The most comfortable one was at the back ; there they had a board to sit on, and when that was fastened at both ends in the stacks, they could pass each other in crossing it. They had laid some planks overhead, and then wood on the top of that, so that nobody might suspect anything ; it had been quite a piece of work for the children. It was not very light, certainly, but then that made it all the cosier. Here she would tell him tales of Spain, and he would tell her of missionaries' adventures ; she told of bull-fights, but he of fights with tigers, lions, and snakes, of terrible cyclones and water-spouts, of savage monkeys and man eaters. And by degrees his stories had eclipsed hers ; they were more exciting, and then there was an object in them ; she had only her recollections to look back to, but he threw him-

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self heart and soul into all his imagination could scrape together. He drew such vivid, glowing pictures, till at last she was fascinated too! At first she felt her way with a few cautious questions as to whether women could be missionaries too? But he did not know; he thought it was only work for men, though they might possibly be allowed to be missionaries' wives. Then she asked if missionaries ever married. He, taking it up as a dogmatic question, answered that he had once heard his father speak on the subject; it was at a meeting when some one had had doubts as to this missionary-marriage question, for St. Paul was the first missionary, and the greatest, too, and he certainly had not been married and even gloried in that fact; but his father had replied that St. Paul believed that Christ was so soon to come again so he had to hurry as quickly as possible from place to place to tell that to the people so that they might be in readiness. But nowadays missionaries always lived in the same place, and therefore might be allowed to marry. He had even read about missionaries' wives who kept schools for the little black children. They had not advanced further than that, but it was easy to see she often thought about it by the questions she asked: If it were true that black children ate snails? She did not like the idea of that at all.

In this dim light, with their two heads, brown and fair, bent close together over their tales of adventures, they had in fancy sat under palm-trees amid swarms of black children, all so good

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and clean and converted, and there were tame tiger-cubs playing on the sand at their feet; friendly, good-natured monkeys waited upon them, elephants conveyed them carefully about, and all the food they needed hung in plenty on the trees.

And now Ole came for the last time to say farewell to this little Paradise.

Just as he raised himself to climb over the stone, he remembered that it was Saturday, and her lessons were always over on Saturdays by eleven o'clock (she took private lessons), and that she often used to sit behind the stacks during the boys' free quarter-hour. Suppose she were sitting there, and had heard all? Up he clambered on to the stone in greatest haste, and there she sat down on the board, and looked at him! At the sight of her and as their eyes met he began sobbing again. "I want to . . . go . . . home," stammered he, "and never . . . never come back again," and he came sliding down to her. She received him with open arms and hastened to give him her pocket-handkerchief to stuff into his mouth that his crying might not be heard. She had a good deal of knowledge as to school and play-ground ways, and knew that some one would soon be sent to look for him. He gave in, as he always did, to her superior guidance in matters of good behaviour and manners; he thought she was reminding him of that everlasting use of the pocket-handkerchief, so he began alternately to blow his nose and to cry. She seized hold of the back of his neck with one of

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her small but coarse girl's hands, with the other she grasped his hands with the handkerchief and forced it right into his mouth, at the same time shaking her dark-haired head warningly in his face. Then it dawned upon him ! And it was high time too ; for he heard his name called down in the yard, again and again on all sides. His whole body shook and trembled with his efforts to stifle his sobs ; but he kept them down bravely, waiting till the boy who had been sent down to look for him had gone rushing back again. He began anew : " I . . . want to . . . go . . . home," and a fresh burst of tears followed, he couldn't help it. So he gave her back her pocket-handkerchief with a nod and got up to pull away the wood in front of the hole in the neighbour's fence, sobbing bitterly all the time and half alarmed at his own grief. Hardly had he pulled the wood aside before he disappeared into the hole ; the seat of his trousers, polished and shiny from daily contact with the school benches, and the iron heels of his boots crept farther and farther in, till at last they vanished ; he stood upright on the other side, pushed himself between the paling and the shed, and on past some old wood-work which lay there rotting, from there he sprang across to the back door, and not until he stood outside on free ground in a narrow road, did he remember that he had forgotten to say good-bye to Josephine and had never even thanked her ! This addition to all his other troubles made him turn and flee from the town, and he never stopped before he, by roundabout ways, had reached

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the high road. 'It was almost as if it were his property, this well-known road by the shore.

Josephine stood still a moment gazing after the vanishing heels ; but she did not wait long. She hopped upon the stone and slid down to the wall, pushed the boards aside, crept through and closed them again carefully behind her. Soon after she was seen at the apothecary's without her hat : she asked after her brother, first down in the shop where she knew he liked to be, but he was not there and he had not been in either to leave his bundle of books. Upstairs she went through all the rooms, but he was not there ! then looking out of the window she saw the great foreign steamer and ten or twelve small boats around it ; of course he would be there ! Away she flew to the pier, unfastened their own little white-painted boat and pushed off.

She rowed until the perspiration streamed down her face, rowed and looked about her until she reached the wreck, the great green monster lying there groaning under the pumps. From afar she could see Edward up on the captain's bridge, with his books under his arm, talking to his friend Mo, the pilot.

As soon as she was within call she shouted his name ; he heard her, he and all the others ; they saw a brown-haired girl, without hat, red and heated with rowing, standing up in the boat, leaning on her oars, and staring up at the captain's bridge ; they did not think much of it, though, and forgot her quickly. But Edward felt a sharp pang ; something out of the common must have

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happened, and it did not take him long to get down from the captain's bridge on to the deck and down the steamer's side, climbing over the other boats and up into hers, exclaiming, as he pushed off: "What's the matter?" He put his books down in the bottom of the boat, took the oars from her and sat down repeating: "What's the matter?"

With streaming hair, breathless and red, she stood and looked at him as he turned the boat; then she moved back to a farther bench. Here she unfastened the other pair of oars and sat down behind him. He did not like to question her a third time so he rowed on silently—and then, keeping her oars on the surface of the water meanwhile, she began:

"What have you done to Ole Tuft?"

He turned pale, then red; he too stopped rowing.

"It's all up with him now at school; he has gone home, and he'll never come back any more."

"Oh, that's a lie!"—but his voice failed him, he felt she was speaking the truth. He plunged the oars into the water with all his strength and rowed with might and main.

"Indeed you had better row hard," though she herself began backing her oars; "you had better hurry after him even if you have to walk all the way to Store Tuft; if you don't, it will be a bad lookout for you both at school and at home with father. What a mean wretch you are!"

"Oh, you hold your tongue!"

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"No, I shan't! and if you don't go after him at once and bring him home with you again, I'll tell father, and the head-master too, I will!"

"It's you who are the mean wretch with all your gossiping and story-telling."

"You should have heard how Anders Hegge went on, and the whole school, and how they laughed at Ole, every one of them; and he, poor fellow, he cried as if his heart would break, and then ran right away home. Oh, fie! fie! For shame! If you don't bring him back with you it will be bad for you."

"You stupid! Don't you see I am rowing as hard as I can?"

His finger-nails were quite white and his face streaming and he bent double each time to take a longer pull at the oars. Without another word she moved over to the bench nearest him and rowed with all her might.

As he stood up when they were nearing the pier and stretched out his hand to prevent the boat bumping against it, he said: "I have had no lunch to-day, and now I shall get no dinner either; have you any money with you that I might buy myself some biscuits?"

"Yes, a few pence I have;" she laid down her oars and looked in her pocket for the money.

"You take my books!" shouted he as he rushed up the street. Shortly after he too was out on the high road.

III

THE day had been dull, the air thick, and the clouds were driving along against a light southerly wind ; it was mild, though, and had begun to thaw again ; the roads were in a fearful state with snow slush and mud, especially close by the town where it had been trampled and trodden into a perfect morass.

Edward had not been walking more than ten minutes before his somewhat thin boots were wet through. Well, that did not matter, what was much worse was that he had finished his last biscuit and was by no means satisfied—not by a long way ! However, even that did not matter as he would soon overtake Ole, he walked so much quicker and lighter than he did, and then he was hurrying tremendously. As soon as he reached him he would put things right again ; not for an instant did he doubt that. Ole was very easily managed and he, Edward, would make all square with the other boys, it was the least he could do ; he would enjoy it, too ; he would get others to join him and they would have a fight.

But after he had walked a quarter of a mile *

* One Norwegian mile = seven English miles.

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without seeing any traces of Ole's boots in the mud and no sign of himself either, and particularly after he had dragged on for another quarter along the most dreadful roads, his feet dripping wet, now perspiring, now cold, then half-dry, then wet again—it was threatening rain and the wind was getting up, and all nature seemed so uncomfortably lonely along the stony ridges with dark woods between each valley—then indeed his courage fell considerably.

And it seemed so strange, too, that after the first quarter of a mile he never met a soul. There were plenty of footmarks on the road both of horses, people, and dogs; they were all bent in the same direction as himself and most of them were quite fresh, but there was not a creature to be seen anywhere, not even in the farmyards, not a dog did he hear bark, nor did he see a chimney smoke; all was deserted. He passed by one empty cove after the other; they were divided by jutting out ridges of loose stones caused by landslips; on each side of these ridges lay a cove, and in every cove one or more farmyards and a brook or stream, but no people. So many times had the boy now struggled up these stony hills and gone so far along that he could see across the next field without distinguishing Ole on the high road, in fact without seeing any one, so he began to think that he would have to trudge on, hungry and tired as he was, the whole way to Store Tuft. It was nearly a mile distant; that would keep him away so long that his father would hear of his

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absence, and then it would be a case of scolding and lecturing, and probably of beating and swearing as well, and the head-master would very likely look in and then it would all begin over again. He could not help it, the tears would come. Confound Anders Hegge, with his greedy, fishy eyes and oily smile, his mocking laugh and sneaking friendliness, the story-teller, the brute ! Here was he now forced to tramp along with tingling feet in all the mud, tired and done up. This then was the meaning of his fearful fright the evening before, now all was explained.

But, hang it all ! who would cry about that ? One must arrive some day at the journey's end, and a beating would be nothing new, tra-la-la ! And he broke into a Spanish ditty and sang verse upon verse till he became quite breathless and was obliged to slacken his pace, but taking fright when he no longer heard the sound of his own voice, he began afresh and kept on singing all the way through the long valley.

He met nobody there either, only traces of cart-wheels and footmarks of old and young folk, of horses and dogs from the farms ; all bound in the same direction. What could be going on ? A fire ? An auction ? But then they would not have taken carts with them. Had there been a landslip anywhere ? Or was it a wreck from yesterday's storm ? Well, it was all the same to him. Just as he was crossing over the next ridge which jutted out into the bay, he caught sight for the first time of Ole's footsteps on the hill ; he could see that he had

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walked along by the side of the road, he recognised the iron heels and the straps under each foot. The marks were quite fresh too, so Ole could not be far off. This was exciting, and he hurried on.

Here there was a thick fir-wood, very still and quiet, and as he had to stop singing going up-hill it was rather uncanny. The farther he advanced into the wood the thicker it became; the snow lay firmer on the ground, stones and small tufts of heather peeping up through it like animals; and then there was a crack here and a rustle there and sometimes a cry; a startled capercaillie flew up with great flapping of wings, and the boy in a terrible fright bent down to look for Ole's foot-marks, just for company's sake—the terror of the day before was on him again. If he dared but begin to run, and if the wood would only come to an end. In the painful long silence that followed the capercaillie's cry he felt that a very little more and he would go mad with fright. And this bit of road with high banks on each side, through which he would have to pass—he looked on ahead at the steep dark sides which seemed as if they would close over him; terrible looking trees hung over the top peering down at him. When at last he arrived there he felt as if he were the tiniest little ant in a wood; if only all would keep still, or at least no one swoop down upon him and seize him by the neck; or drop down suddenly before him or behind him, or begin to puff and blow at him. . . . He walked on with stiff eyes, like one walking in his sleep,

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the gnarled and crooked roots of the fir-trees stretched along the banks, they seemed as though alive, but he pretended not to notice them. High up in the air far in front of him a bird was winging its way toward the town he came from. Ah, if he might but mount that bird! He could see the town distinctly and the ships in the harbour; he could hear the cheery heave-a-hoy songs and the rattling of anchor chains, the rolling of barrels along the wharf, and the merry screams of laughter and the shouts of command. . . . Yes, he could even hear those, and the whistle of a steamer! and then another, a shrill one! and voices! Those *were* voices! And the neighing of horses, and barking of dogs! And again the sound of voices, many voices. He had got through the road with the steep banks, for it had only been a short bit, and through the trees he could see the sea and boats. . . . But what was that? Was he back in town again? Had he been walking round and round? No, surely he had followed the sea all the way. He began to run, he felt all right again. But had he really walked straight on? Of course, here is the clearing in the wood, and there the bay, he knew it well, and the little islands, he remembered them too, it was the right way, and it was not so very far now to Store Tuft. . . . But what are all those boats doing there? And what is the meaning of that steady buzzing noise! Herring fishing! Hurrah! herring fishing! He had come right into the midst of a take of herrings, hurrah! hurrah! And away

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with hunger, fatigue, and fear, off flew the boy down the hill with mighty strides.

One of the sweep-nets had been hauled in, one was out, one was just going to be put out, it was a great take. But it was Saturday evening, and it was necessary to net the herrings before Sunday evening, and to gut the fish that was already taken. In the twinkling of an eye he understood it all.

The shore was crowded with people, near the road and on the road, and up on the fields, crowds and crowds. And endless carts and sledges with barrels and tubs, some with horses still harnessed, others with the horses taken out, crowds of dogs; children everywhere, and great laughter and noise. Out in the bay the boats were round the sweep-net that was to be put out, the men shouting and calling to each other, and high in the air a flock of birds flew overhead, flapping their wings and screaming.

The sky was overcast, the smoke from the steamers making the air seem thicker and more threatening, the bare, bleak islands seemed suited to the coming storm, they looked as if they had just started into existence; the little wooded islet far out rose up solitary and mysterious through the rainy mist; the steamers came steaming in, puffing and whistling as if for a wager; they belonged to rival companies. Men were stamping about in fishermen's boots and in oilskin clothes over their ordinary ones; others were dressed more like peasants in coarse cloth coats and fur caps. Women as well as men were busy clean-

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ing the fish, wrapped in shawls or in a man's jacket over their own ; the usual quiet style of conversation had been disturbed.

Heavy drops of rain began to fall, faster and faster ; nearly all the faces Edward looked at were wet with the rain. They stared a great deal at him, the delicate looking town boy in the midst of this noisy crowd, thinly clad, with dripping face and breathless, his little fur cap clinging wet to his head.

Who should he see just in front of him but Ingebert Syvertsen, the tall, black-haired man, who did business with his father. He was standing there bargaining, tall and thin, and dressed in oilskin from top to toe ; he had evidently taken a very active part in it all, the shiny fish-scales lay thick on his arms and his boots like silver.

"Good day, Ingebert !" shouted the boy in great light.

The great fellow with wet face under his sou'wester, a great drop hanging from his nose, thin black beard, and three of his upper teeth missing, knew him at once and laughed ; then he said : "Your father is somewhere about my lad, he is out riding to-day."

Some one spoke to Ingebert at that moment ; he turned round, became angry and abusive, which took up time, when he turned again to speak to the boy he saw him already far away along the road beyond the whole of the fishing crowd.

Edward had run away from sheer fright—and

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it was only when he found himself out on the road that he remembered he was running just in the direction his father was coming from. Was it likely he could get to Store Tuft without meeting his father ?

But what was he to do ? All those people had seen him, and had stared hard at him, they would be sure to find out who he was, and then when his father came riding past he would hear of it too. There was not much use trying to run away. It was all one whether he got a beating now or one later. He felt inclined to sing again, for nothing could be worse than the present state of affairs. He actually did strike up a song, the Marseillaise, in French ; it was so very suitable for one advancing to get a beating as he was ! But before he got to the end of the first verse his courage failed him, his voice grew fainter, the time slower, there was a general change of colouring. And oh, it was heavy walking, and raining fast. So his song gradually died away until it stopped. Then the boy's thoughts went back to something he had lately read in the papers about a large coal-mine in England that had been inundated with water. The miners tried to escape as quickly as possible, the horses after them, down in the mine they could not help themselves, poor creatures ! One boy who had escaped told the others about a horse that had neighed and whinnied so hopelessly ; the boy climbed to the top, but not the horse. . . . Edward could distinctly see what the horse must have looked like, its head, the beautiful shining

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eyes, he heard its breathing, its whinnying and felt himself turn quite sick. What it must be to die amid such horrors! And to think that all that would come to life again at the day of judgment! And all that would arise from the mines and very bowels of the earth! Why not the animals too? Surely they would come forward whining and complaining against mankind? Great heavens, what complaints there would be. And so many animals, too—only fancy, from the creation of the world! And where were they all to be found? On the earth and down in the earth—and think of those that lay in the sea, at the bottom of the deep sea! And those who lay under that again, for in many places there had been land where there now was sea. Well, well!

Oh, how hungry he was! And cold too; he could no longer walk so fast, and he was very, very tired.

And certainly there was nothing very inviting to look forward to, oh, no! Well he knew the new riding-whip; he had himself despatched the old one out of the world; but if he had known that the new one was still worse, he would have let the old one live on for a couple of years more. Ouf! how his nails began to ache and his fingers to swell with the cold. And his feet! But it would never do to think about them or they got worse directly; hark, how the water sopped in his boots! He amused himself by putting his feet forward cross ways, and went on from right to left, from left to right till he got tired of that too. Harder and harder was the

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struggle, more and more tedious, again he had to climb up hill. Dear me! is not this the last hill? Does not Store Tuft lie in the next valley? Just under the hill? Surely that is Store Tuft? Perhaps after all he could get there before his father? It would always be something gained, the evil day put off awhile. At any rate it was worth hurrying for. Fresh life came to the boy, on he went again!

His father was not always severe either, he could be kind sometimes. Especially if Josephine were on his side and asked to get him off; and if Ole came back again then she surely would do that, she must take his part. They could try, too, to make the apothecary join them! He, the apothecary, was always so kind, and it is a good thing to be many. Good heavens! were there no others who——

Up came the chestnut's head over the hill-top! The big straw shoes which his father used in the winter as stirrups stood out on each side of the old hack like the paws of a wild beast; the boy stood still, petrified.

The old hack stared at the lad from out of its heavy Spanish harness; it could hardly believe its own clever eyes! Neither could the boy's father believe his, for the round head in the grey woollen cap stretched farther and farther forward over the horse's neck, till he had to lean with both hands on the pommel of the saddle. Was that drenched, dripping boy, with the wisp of fur on his head, standing terrified and pale as a ghost in the middle of the road—was that the boy who

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ought to be sitting at home doing his lessons before he was allowed to move? And on Saturday afternoon! In such weather and such roads, and so thinly clad, out on the hill at Store Tuft? And without permission?

"What the devil are you doing there?"

The horse was pulled up sharp; its warm breath seemed to fill the air around the boy and envelop him in a thick mist of unpleasant vapours from its steaming body. Edward dared neither move nor answer. He only stared up at his father through the mist in a stupid, clumsy fashion, as though half-dazed.

His father dismounted without delay, and with the bridle round his left arm and the whip in his right hand he stood before the boy.

"What's the matter? Hey? Why are you here! Why the devil can't you answer?"

Mechanically Edward slipped farther and farther away, his father after him; mechanically, too, the boy raised his right arm to shield his face, and stretched out his left to ward off the coming blows.

"Where are you going to?"

"To Ole Tuft."

"What are you going to do there? Hey! Is Ole Tuft at home? Hey?"

"Yes."

"What are you going there for?"

"I am going to—to——"

"Well!"

"To beg his pardon."

"To beg his pardon? What for? What for? Hey?" and he raised his whip.

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The boy answered, hurriedly : " He won't come to school any more."

" Oh, indeed ! So you've been teasing him ? Hey ? You at the head ? Hey ? "

" Yes."

" Your fault, was it ? Hey ? " he cried.

" I found out——" here he stopped.

" Well ? "

" That he—that he——" and the boy began to cry.

" Well ? "

" That he goes to visit the sick."

" So you told the others ? Hey ? Carried tales ? Hey ? "

Edward dared not answer, and then the whip began to be troublesome ; both the lad's arms swung up and down, keeping time with the whip, as if uncertain where it would fall next. He kept slipping farther and farther away.

" Stand still ! " shouted his father.

But instead the boy sprang with one bound right to the edge of the ditch. Fiercely the father lifted his whip again ; but, unintentionally, the horse behind him received such a sharp cut that it pulled so hard at the bridle as nearly to upset its master. Edward could not resist the comical side of this most welcome deliverance and he burst into a roar of laughter. But he was so startled at hearing himself laugh that he hopped over the ditch and ran into the wood. He could not possibly control himself as he turned away ; he began to laugh again, and could hit upon no better way of hiding it than to set up a good howl.

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The father's contempt for his son was not to be described. He recovered his temper, though, quieted the horse, and mounted again. "Come along," said he, quietly, pointing with his whip in the direction of the Tuft valley.

"There will be more accounts to settle when we get there," thought the boy to himself.

He obeyed his father's call, of course, and walked on, but at a safe distance in front of the horse. He kept at the same distance all the time; the horse was a quick stepper, so it was an effort.

The man in grey on the chestnut horse drove his son mercilessly on before him, through the snow and slush, although one could clearly see by the way he walked that his feet hurt him, and although his hands were half-frozen—he kept putting them in his mouth—and although he was dripping wet; his fur cap was sticking to his head like a washed-out rag. The man in grey sat comfortably on his horse, in warm, waterproof clothes, his whip in his hand, his eyes glistening on each side of his hooked nose. No one who saw this little procession could have guessed that the dearest wish of this stern-looking man was to love the boy he was so angrily driving before him.

But in order to love any one that person must be exactly as we would wish—is not that the case? And supposing now the boy was not willing? And that Kallem was not accustomed to opposition? His wife's death was the first serious blow he had met with; it happened not very long before this affair with the boy. Up to

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that time they had all lived abroad, Kallem leading a quiet retired life with his wife, his business, sport, and his silent books (he was a great reader), and had never been worried or annoyed. His wife's brother took charge of the business, which was a flourishing one, and his wife took charge of the house, where all flourished too. Everything was managed without fear or disturbance, and exactly as was proper, until the wife died. But afterward!

At first neither he himself nor any of the others could realise the unexpected change that had come over him. Some people thought that the loss of his wife had made him mad; he himself thought that the air of Spain was too warm; he was anxious to leave, and longed for home. The head of the firm agreed at once. It would be a capital speculation to move the principal house of business to Norway and just have a branch house in Spain. And so they left—now about a year ago.

But it was the boy who, when they were still in Spain, had been the cause of his father's first losing command of himself, and indeed the second time too, and unfortunately also the third, fourth, fifth, sixth time; it was always the boy. And the same thing, too, when they had moved to Norway. Hot or cold climate, the boy was equally troublesome.

Soon there began to come complaints about him over from the school, then, from the apothecary, who was an old friend of Kallem's, and in whose house they had lodgings; then from the courtyard, from the neighbours, and from the

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wharf. But possibly other parents also heard complaints about their sons, and perhaps people in this part of the world were more given to complaining ; of course Kallem could know nothing about that, for he was a solitary man. But he knew that his son was the cleverest lad in all the school ; one master after the other came and assured him of that ; he knew that nothing was lacking in the boy, neither heart nor will ; but he was peculiar, indifferent to all, and yet liked meddling in matters that did not concern him. He was both brave and cowardly, a shameful tease, and altogether hopelessly naughty. He would have tried the patience of an angel from heaven, to say nothing of Kallem, who was entirely without that virtue.

This thin, slippery customer, limping on in front of him with frightened side-glances at both horse and whip, had spoilt the peace of his father's life. Not only had he made him feel inwardly so unsafe and uncertain, but at times his want of power became perfect helplessness, and on those occasions he longed to beat the boy to smithereens.

He would send for him and try both threats and entreaties. Last night, the night of the storm, he had kept guard over him and used all his powers of persuasion trying to talk the boy out of his shameful fright, scolded him and tried to make it clear to him by all manner of natural history proofs that the prophecy about the end of the world was all a lie, an invention. The boy answered, yes, and indeed, but did not believe a

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word his father said ! As soon as the storm broke he was like one crazy, out and away in the most abject state of fear.

And here he is now to-day, out on the open high road, a mile from the town, in rain, storm, and wind, and of course without permission. First he goes and ill-treats the best lad in the school, a little fellow whom Kallem was really fond of and had helped with a few pence now and then for his little mission, which he heard of from Josephine ; and then on the top of that——

“Look at him !” said he, to himself. “Deuce take the boy, if he isn’t laughing !” but he pretended not to see it.

What was that ? Why, the horse behind him with “What the devil” on its back, and the whip, and the heavy tramp, tramp in the snow and slush. Sop-sop, sop-sop, sop-sop, sop-sop ; all this grew and grew and got larger and larger, until it became a huge monster all twisted and shapeless. . . . Hurriedly the boy began thinking of other things. He threw himself into the coalmine in England that had been inundated, and tried to conjure up before him the horse that had neighed so piteously after the escaping miner lad. But no, he could not force himself into the mine ; there was nothing but the high road and “sop-sop, sop-sop,” and “What the devil” and his whip, and he himself in front limping along with one leg and a half, he, he—e—e !

A shrill “Hey !” came from behind. The sound seemed to creep down the boy’s back like a sharp piece of ice.

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Presently Store Tuft came in sight. It lay just below the hill they were going down. There were many outhouses, most of them in a square round the farmyard; a stream rushed noisily by on the other side where the corn and saw-mills lay; the islands outside and the two arms of land on either side shut in the bay so completely that the water there was as still and quiet as a mill-pond, with ice in the corners; there was a row of boathouses side by side along the bay; there were fruit-gardens, too, most of them a good size.

The smoke rose up from the house-chimney at Store Tuft—at last! Ole's mother must be cooking dinner for him! And hunger, grief, and longing came over the boy, and the thought of a warm room and dry clothes, and the remembrance of his own mother and of their home in Spain nearly made him cry again; but then he thought that his father would say: "Devil take him! Now he's crying again!" so he controlled himself.

He looked toward the farm with fear and trembling

The house lay with its longest side out to the garden; it was a two-storeyed wooden house, painted red, with white window-sills. They turned up the road, the boy still in front, the father after him.

Passing the short end of the house they came into the yard; on the other side of that lay cow-house and stable, under the same roof; these buildings were quite new, and lay at right angles with the barn, wood-house, and other buildings in the middle. A herd of goats stood in this

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corner munching leaves, and surrounded by an incredible number of sparrows. The whole party were collected together just outside the barn.

The goats caught sight of the newcomers ; they lifted their heads and stretched out their necks all at the same moment, their eyes wide open, ears standing up stiff, with the last bite immovable in their mouths, inquisitive to the last degree. The billy-goat only kept on munching as he looked at them, lazily satisfied. The flock of sparrows flew away with a whirr.

Between the cattle-stable and the short end of the dwelling-house, the father stopped and dismounted. The boy was already inside the yard, and stood staring at the barn roof, which was broken up and being renewed, but there were no workmen to be seen ; probably they had gone off to the herring fishery ; the ladder still stood on the scaffolding, leaning upward.

"Stop !" shouted the father, and the boy stopped and turned round ; his father was tying up his old hack to one of the grinding stones which stood up against this short end of the dwelling-house ; the lad stood and looked on.

"Wonderful, how quiet he is now," thought the father, as he came forward and pointed with his whip. The boy was to walk in front of him up to the broad stone step at the entrance in the middle of the house. And he did so. Past a sledge with railed-in seat that was standing there ; he discovered two kittens playing with each other through the railing, the one inside, the other outside. The windows they went past were so low

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that they could see right through the little room which had windows on the other side, and through that again into the other room. There sat Ole in a huge shirt that reached down to his feet, in front of the hearth with his legs up ; his mother stood beside him, bending over some pots and pans. Edward had not time to see more ; he stepped over the stone and into the passage, where he was met by a strong smell of fish, both old and new ; also a smell of something else which he could not at first make out. The father pointed on to the right ; to the left, too, there was a door, grandly painted and with a brass handle, and he was not meant to go there. No, thought the boy, I knew that much, too, that we were to go where there are people, and not into the cold guest-room. He put his swollen fingers on the latch and lifted it.

The fireplace was in the corner to the left, close by the door, and one can fancy how the two in there opened their eyes ! To such an extent that curly-lock's head stretched up out of his father's wide blue linen shirt. The mother was tall and had a delicate face ; she wore a black cap ; her fair hair was puffed out down her cheeks and made her face seem long. She turned from her pots and pans toward the two arrivals, whom she knew both. It was a grave but friendly face. She seemed afraid and uncertain. Just at first she did not let her eyes rest on either of them. Ole's boots stood by the fireside ; but his clothes, shirt, and stockings, were hung up to dry above on some of the many poles that reached across

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from beam to beam. On the other poles were bundles of wood and various things put up to dry. Dishes and cups stood about just as usual on a weekday.

The room was not painted but wainscoted ; on each side under the windows there were red-painted benches. In the corner to the left, at the other side of the window, stood a table with a bookcase above ; at the end of the table, just by the door into the smaller room, hung the clock. It ticked as evenly and cheerily as if there had never before been anything but peace in that room. Outside he saw the kittens in the sledge, the one inside sticking its paw out through the railing, and the outside one pushing its paw in ; and then he saw Ole's face just in front of him. He was smiling, was Ole, and it was because he too was afraid. But those pots and pans ! Hungry and tired as Edward was, the pot seemed to him the best part of it all. There were potatoes in the one which stood down, quite ready ; but two pots still hung over the fire ; could it be fish in one of them ? But in the other ?

The mother hesitated, not knowing what to do ; for they remained standing there, the angry looking man and the boy. At last just as she was going to ask them to sit down, or something similar, the father began. He presumed that she knew now what had happened, hey ? The boy had come to beg pardon and to receive his punishment ; it was quite necessary, for he was a bad boy and nothing but punishing did him any good ; kindness was utterly wasted on him.

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"Oh, must it be?" said the mother mildly. She was quite frightened, and Ole turned a bluish-white, like the shirt he had on.

"Yes, he must have a beating! Beg pardon first. Sharp's the word?"

Ole began to cry, not so Edward. Ole could not sit still; he got up, he looked at his mother: "Mother, dear!" said he. He could not get out another word; but his meaning was evident, his mother was to make peace between them.

"Beg pardon!" shouted the father, and the whip became restless.

"But, mother dear!" shrieked Ole.

Then Edward had to come forward. Ole turned away; he could not look on any longer, he was not used to that sort of thing. Edward dived and ducked, his father after him with clanking spurs. In his fright Edward rushed to Ole's mother with outstretched hand; she did not take it, but Ole began to yell. So much sympathy was too much for poor Edward; he too began to roar, as he dashed round and round the mother. There was such a hubbub and noise that again the goats stopped their munching and stared in, listening; the sparrows too, which had come back, flew away over the roof.

And what happened? The sparrows showed the boy the way. Quick as lightning, he flew past his father and out at the door, which he left wide open behind him. They saw the goats fly on all sides, and the boy into the scaffolding, up the ladder, and on to the roof. Directly he got there he began to pull the ladder up after him,

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"Look at him ! Look at him !" screamed his father from the window. "Hey !" and away he rushed.

As soon as his son saw him coming he dropped the ladder which fell thundering down. Like a cat the lad ran up the rafters to the ridge of the roof and along that, balancing himself as though he had never done anything else all his life. He thought no more of his aching feet.

His father was in great alarm : "Take care, I say, take care there, take care ! Come away from there, and at *once* ! Come down, you young wretch !" He ran out into the yard in his long riding-boots and threatened him with the whip.

"I think I see myself ! I shall jump right down into the yard !"

"Mad boy ! Devil take him ! Will you come down ?"

"Yes if you'll not beat me !"

"I won't promise."

"Oh, you won't promise ?" and away crept the boy farther out along the ridge.

"Yes, yes ! O you wretch ! O you coward !"

"Well, have you promised ?"

"Devil take your promising. Come down, get 't you !"

"And you won't pull my hair either ?"

"Down with you ! You'll only fall up there !"

"You won't pull my hair and won't beat me, and won't do anything ?"

"No, no, no ! But come down * directly ! Look, now you're slipping ! Edward, do you hear ?" shouted he.

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"Well, will you keep to what you promise?"

"Oh! what don't you deserve!" and he threatened up with his whip. "Yes, yes, I promise! But take care!"

But the boy went on: "May I stay here till to-morrow with Ole? May I?"

"I won't answer anything till you come down."

"Oh, you won't? all right!"

"Oh you scoundrel; oh, you miserable rascal!"

"Do you agree, then?"

"Yes, deuce take you! But get away from the outer edge at least! Devil take the boy!"

"I say, it might be just as well if you went away first, father."

"Not I; you'll not get me to do that. Never. I must see you down first."

The boy thought this just as well. His father put up the ladder and slowly the lad came down; but not until his father had gone a little way back into the yard. And he kept his distance, although his father wished to speak to him and assured him he would not harm him. Neither would he go into the house as long as his father stayed there; but being wet through, obliged his father to go away.

Five or six minutes after both lads lay kicking on the floor, Edward in just as big a shirt as Ole's and equally naked otherwise; they were both going to put on a pair of thick wollen stockings, of the kind the peasants use that come well up over the thighs. They had thought it easier to try and put them on sitting on the floor, which was strewn with sand. There they pushed each

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other over and laughed as though many days had gone by since *that* happened which we have just witnessed. Everything Edward did Ole did after him ; they laughed until at last the quiet, gentle mother was obliged to laugh too ; there was no end to all that Edward hit upon. They were to put on those long stockings so that they might sit at table and eat their dinner without feeling too cold ; at table there was no fireplace for their legs. And at last they were so far ready they got them on. And then was disclosed the contents of the other pot ; it was cream porridge. Edward had never tasted that before. Ole was to be coaxed into better spirits than he was in when he arrived, therefore his mother had made that porridge for him. Edward applauded loudly and greeted the food with laughter.

But all at once Ole sat quite solemn and quiet. What now ? Hands folded, eyes cast down ? The mother stood before them ; she too was serious with folded hands and cast-down eyes. Her face was bent down, it seemed to be vanishing gradually farther and farther, or rather it was as if shutters were put up before and all light in it extinguished. And then she began, as though from afar, a long, long grace, in a low monotonous voice, as if she were talking quietly with some one but at some other place. Edward felt himself out of it all. His loneliness and fright came back again, the old recollections and the old longing for his mother. Then it passed away, pushed back like a shutter ; it all vanished behind the hill.

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Edward had never before been present when grace was said at meals, and her manner and ways were so altogether new to him, and he did not understand her and her mumbling. He sat very quiet for some time after. Ole did not speak either ; all the time while they were dining he was very silent and hardly even smiled. Food was God's gift ; a certain solemnity was therefore necessary.

But what a serious matter their eating was ! The mother asked them at last if they did not think it would be best to keep a little till the evening ? No, they said, this was dinner and supper in one. They were to sleep together in the servant's room, which was used as a spare room ; the fire had been lighted there, and now they would sit by the fireside for an hour or so and then go to bed.

The mother saw they would rather be alone, so she left them.

Then afterward when they were in the bedroom ! At first the most terrific row ; the bed-clothes and feather-beds flew about them ; then they grew calmer after each attack, and at last they began to talk. Ole told how the boys had treated him and Edward promised that he would give that boy such a thrashing—yes, even if it were Anders Hegge himself—if he would not hold his tongue about the “ways of God,” and all that, Edward would give him a proper kind of beating. Anders Hegge was a coward. He knew who he would get to help him ; they would have such fun !

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As they grew more tired they became sentimental. Ole spoke of Josephine and Edward joined in and assured him that she had behaved splendidly that day. He described her as she came rowing out in search of him. Ole thought this grand. Certainly there was something great about Josephine; they both agreed as to that.

Edward could not understand why Ole should wish to be a missionary? Why on earth was it such an excellent thing to go off on wild adventures when one had enough to do here at home? Ole should be a clergyman and he would be a doctor, and they would both live together in the same town; would not that be much nicer?

And Edward went on drawing pictures of their future life. They were to live next door to each other and be often together; in the evenings particularly, with their glass of punch, just as his father and the apothecary were and play chess together as those two did. And they would have a carriage for high days and holidays, and each harness his own horse to it and drive out together; it would be more sociable like that. Or else they would live by the sea-side and have a big boat between them; everything must be between them.

In Ole's fancy Josephine was to be always with them, though Edward did not actually say as much. But it was clear that she was to be with them. And Ole thought this showed so much tact on Edward's part and was very grateful to him; indeed it quite decided him. Josephine was

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to be the clergyman's wife and manage everything in the house.

At last he agreed to all ; it was decided that one was to be a clergyman and the other a doctor, and they were to live together. The last thing they talked about was their fishing expeditions.

They heard sounds of tramping and talking ; it was the men coming home from the herring-fishing. But they were very tired and soon fell asleep.

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FIRST COUPLE FORWARD

THERE was a party of young people collected together at a country house about five kilometres outside the town. The garden they were sitting in down by the cove was brightly coloured by their light summer clothes, especially those of the girls :

• " Yellow, black, brown, white,
 , Green, violet, blue,"

some self-coloured, others variegated, checks and stripes ; felt hats, straw hats, tulle hats, caps, bare heads, parasols. A sound of singing rose harmoniously up out of this medley of colour ; men's and women's voices in chorus floating in long undulating waves of sound. There was no conductor ; a dark young girl in a brown checked dress lay in the midst of the group, leaning on one elbow, and led the singing with a soprano voice stronger and clearer than the others ; and they followed her lead. They were in good practice. In the cove below them lay a freshly

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painted smack, with half rigged up new sails ; the water calm as a mirror.

The singing and the smack seemed brightly to enter into league with each other down in that black-looking cove, overshadowed and shut in by the bleak mountains with still higher ones in the distance. The little cove was like a mountain lake, once caused by a flood but since forgotten. The mountains—oh, so heavy and stunted in outline as in colour, rugged and leaden-looking, the more distant ones blue-black, with dirty snow on their peaks, monsters all of them.

The smack lay on the black water, ready for a dance ; it belonged to a more light-hearted community than these lofty accessories of nature and human life. The smack and the singing protested against all overweening despotism, all that was rude, rough and coarse—a free swaying protest, proudly delighting in their colours.

But the mountains took no notice of this protest, nor did the young people ever understand that it had been made. The "high-born" part of being born and bred in scenery like that of Norway's west country is just this, that nature forces one to make a stand, if one would not be utterly crushed and overwhelmed ; either one must be beneath or above all ! And they were above ; for the west country folk are the brightest and cleverest of all Scandinavians. In so great a degree do they feel themselves masters of the situation as regards their scenery that not one of all these young people felt the mountains as heavy and cold in colour ; all nature seemed to

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them fresh and strong, as nowhere else in the world.

But they who now sat there singing or listening only had not been born and nurtured by glad songs and the wide sea alone ; no, they were children of the mountains too ; children of them as well as of the songs and sea. Just before the song began they had been engaged in a discussion as sharp and cutting, as leaden-hued as any mountain. It was to do away with this stone-like sharpness among themselves that they had sent forth their melodious song, building long bridges of glorious harmony across the mountain-peaks and precipices. The summer day was slightly grey in itself ; but occasionally (just as at that moment !) the sun shone forth over song and sail and landscape.

There sat two on whom both sun and song were wasted. Look at him down there, a little to the right, lying in the grass, leaning on his elbow ; a tall young fellow in light summer clothes and without hat, a round closely-cropped head, short, broad forehead that looked like butting, a forehead that in his boyish days must have given many a hard bang ! Below the forehead was a nose like a beak, and sharp eyes that just then were slightly squinting ; either the spectacles concealed it so as to make it hardly visible, or else it really was only very slight. The whole face had something severe about it, the mouth was pinched and hard and the chin sharp. But when one looked more closely into it the impression it gave one changed entirely ; all that was so sharply cut

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became energetic rather than severe, and the spirit which had taken up its abode in this mountainous country could doubtless be both a friendly and a mischievous one. Even then, as he sat in a towering rage, not caring a hang about either sunshine or song, he would rather have had a fight—even then gleams of merriment shot out from under the angry brows. It was clear that he was the conqueror.

If any one doubted it they need only cast an eye over to the other side of the group on him who sat up against a tree to the left, a little higher up the bank. He was the picture of a wounded warrior, suffering, and with all the trembling uneasiness of battle still in his features. It was a long fair face, not a west country face, but belonging rather to the mountain districts or highlands; either he was a foreigner, or else he came of a race of immigrants; he was strikingly like the popular pictures of Melancthon, though perhaps the eyes were a little more dreamy and the eyebrows a little more arched; altogether the likeness, particularly the forehead, position of the eyes, and the mouth, was so striking that among his fellow-students he always went by the name of Melancthon.

This was Ole Tuft, student in theology, his studies nearly completed; and the other one, the conqueror with the eagle's beak (which just now had been hacking so sharply), was the friend of his childhood, Edward Kallem, medical student.

Several years ago their paths in life had begun to deviate, but so far there had never been any serious encounter between them; but now what had happened was to prove decisive.

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Between these two, in the middle of the garden and surrounded by the singers, sat a tall girl in a plum-coloured silk dress, round her neck some broad yellow lace which hung in long loose folds down to her waist. She herself was not singing; she was making a wreath out of a whole garden of field flowers and grass. One could easily see that she was sister to the conqueror, but with darker complexion and hair. The same shape of head, although her forehead was comparatively higher and the whole face larger, undoubtedly too large. The sharp family nose had a more gentle bend in her well-proportioned face; his thin lips became fuller, his chin more rounded, his uneven eyebrows more even, the eyes larger—and yet it was the same face. The expression of the two was different; hers, though not cold, was calm and silent; no one could quickly read those deep eyes; and yet the two expressions were much alike. Her head was well set on a strong-looking neck and well-shaped shoulders, the bust, too, was well developed. Her dark hair was twisted into a knot peculiar to herself. Her throat was bare, but the dress, with its yellow lace fastened closely round it—indeed, her whole attire gave one the idea of something shut in, buttoned up as it were; and so it was with her whole manner. As before said, she was making a wreath and looked neither at one nor the other of the two who had been fighting.

The quarrel has been caused by a large black dog; it lay there now pretending to sleep, its thick wet coat glistening in the sun. Several of

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them had been throwing sticks into the water and sending the dog in after them; each time they threw a stick they shouted, "Samson! Samson!"—that was the dog's name. Edward Kallem said to two or three who stood near him, "Samson means sun-god."

"What?" asked one young girl, "does Samson mean sun-god?"

"Certainly it does; but of course the clergymen take care not to tell that." He said it in youthful exuberance, not in the least intending to hurt any one's feelings, or to say more at all. But by chance Ole Tuft overheard him and said, with rather a superior air:

"Why should the clergymen not dare to tell the children that Samson means sun-god?"

"Why, for then the whole legend about him could no longer serve them as a type of the Christ-myth."

This last word was like a sharp stab, and it was meant as such. With a superior smile Ole said:

"I suppose Samson may be used as a type, whether he be *called* sun-god or not."

"Certainly, whether he be *called* sun-god or not, but suppose him to *be* sun-god?"

"Indeed, so he was sun-god?" shouted Ole, laughing.

"The name tells us so."

"The name? Are we bears or wolves because we are called after bears or wolves? Or gods because we are called after gods?"

Several of the party stood by listening; others

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joined them, Josephine among the number, and both turned at once to her.

"The misfortune is," said Edward, "that it is only the fact of his being a sun-god that gives any sense to the stories told about Samson."

"Oh, nowadays all old records of everybody's forefathers are turned into sun legends." And Ole related a few amusing parodies of this scientific craze now so much in vogue. They all laughed, Josephine too ; Edward became excited at once and began to explain that our gods, who were Indian sun-gods, had in reality been turned into our forefathers when a new religion was started ; the altars which then had been used for sacrifices were turned into graves or burying-places. In the same way all the old sun-gods of the Jews had been changed to forefathers when the worship of Jehovah did away with them as gods.

"Who can know that?"

"Kpow it? Why, take Samson! How utterly meaningless to believe that anyone's strength should be in his hair! But as soon as we take it for granted that it is the sun's rays, lengthy in summer-time, but cut short in the lap of winter, then there is some sense in it. And when the rays grew longer and longer, and spring drew near, then all can understand that the sun-god could again encircle with his arms the pillars of the world. Never have bees been known to deposit their honey in a beast's carcase ; but when we hear that each time the sun passes over one of the signs of the stars—for instance, the lion's—then it is said that the sun slaughtered the lion ;

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then we can understand that the bees made their honey in the dead lion's carcase, that is to say, in the hottest part of the summer."

The whole party was all ears, and Josephine was highly astonished. She did not look up at her brother because she felt he was looking at her, but the impression made was unmistakable. What Edward had at first started, without other thought than that of showing off a little, was now a decided thing aimed at, and it was because Josephine stood between them.

"With the Egyptians," explained he, "the spring began when the sun slaughtered the lamb, that is to say, passed across the sign of the lamb—in their delight at the renewal of all things, every Egyptian slaughtered a lamb that day. The Jews have it from them. It is utterly false if the Jews later on have changed this to something that separates them from the Egyptians. Just as with the circumcision, they have that, too, from Egypt. But clergymen take care never to speak of that kind of thing."

Ole Tuft had little or no knowledge of all these things. His plodding studies had been severely theological, he had not time for more, and his faith was an inheritance from an old peasant race, and was far too secure in itself to be capable of scientific doubts. Had he announced this fact straight out, there would probably have been an end of the matter. But he too felt that Josephine stood between them and was allowing herself to be led away. So he began with great scorn to call everything vague inventions, empty de-

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vices, shining one day, melted away on the morrow.

The other's vanity would not stand this. "Theologians," cried he, "are wanting in the very simplest honesty. They conceal the fact that the most important items of their faith are not revealed to the Jews, but simply taken up and accepted from elsewhere! Like the creed of immortality, that is from Egypt. The same with the Commandments. No one climbs up on to a high mountain to have revealed to him in a thunderstorm what others have known for thousands of years. Where is the devil from? And the punishments of hell? Whence the last day and judgment? And the angels? The Jews knew nothing of all this. Clergymen are a set—in short, a set who do not honestly investigate matters, telling people such things."

Josephine subsided completely; all the young people, particularly the men, were evidently on Kallem's side; freethinking was the fashion, and it was amusing to have a laugh at the old faith handed down from days of yore.

One young man began mocking at the history of the creation; Kallem possessed both geological and palæontological learning, and he made good use of it. Still less on this subject could Ole Tuft argue with them; he alluded again to a trial that had been made to reconcile the doctrines of the Bible with more recent discoveries, but it fared badly with him. And on they went in rapid succession from dogma to dogma—now they lay basking in the doctrine of the atonement of sins,

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it descended from so ancient and uncultured a time that such a thing as individual responsibility was not then known, merely that of the whole tribe or family. Tuft was in despair; to him it really was an important question, and much moved, in a loud voice, he began to confess his faith. As if that were of any use! Excuses! Inventions!—show us your proofs! Too late, Ole Tuft perceived that he had defended the cause too eagerly and had therefore lost all. He was overcome with grief, fought without hope, but fought on all the same and shouted out that, if a single one of all those truths seemed doubtful, the fault was his; he lacked the power to defend it. But the word of God would stand unharmed to the last hour of the world! What is the Word of God? It is the spirit and entirety of the Bible, the creation (No!); the deluge (No No!); the expiation by death (No, No, No!); he shouted, they shouted; the tears rushed to Tuft's eyes, his voice shook; he looked pale and handsome.

Young people are not quite so cruel as children; but still it is the same kind of spirit. Some were sorry for him, others just wanted to drive him into a corner, Edward Kallem first and foremost.

But Josephine stepped quickly away to the dark girl with the soprano voice. She began one of their songs directly, the others joined in, the gentlemen rather after the ladies. With very few exceptions, the party consisted of a chorus of ladies and gentlemen who had practised together the last three winters with all the perseverance and industry only to be met with in a small town.

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Josephine went and sat down in the middle of the bank, the others round about her. She did not sing ; she had her flowers.

The party had come out there in the little schooner which now lay so fresh and bright-looking in the sun. On board, Josephine, Edward, and Ole had sat together, close together, for there was not much room. No one could guess, hearing their merry, oft-whispered conversation, that there was aught between them save friendship and goodwill. And now, only three hours after, Ole Tuft sat there like an outcast ! How he suffered ! An attack on his calling, on his faith, and before them all ! And by Edward, too ! So cruel, so persistingly scornful ! And Josephine ? Not a single word of sympathy, not even a look from Josephine. •

From their childhood Ole and she had been constantly together ; they had written to each other when he was away at Christiania, he once a fortnight, she as often as she had anything to write about. When he was at home for his holidays they met daily. During the two years that she was at a French school and away in Spain their correspondence had been more active than ever, on her part, too, and when she came home again—changed though she was otherwise—to him she was always the same. Her father had helped him with his studies and enabled him to give all his attention to them ; he was to pass his last examination at Christmas ; every one prophesied that it would be one of the first and best ever passed in theology. Undoubtedly he had her, and

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possibly her brother too, to thank for his having been helped. In former days they had both of them brought him to their father, to the headmaster, to the apothecary, and to many other families ; and now through her he was accepted everywhere. In everyday life she spoke but little, and was often rather difficult to get on with ; but she was a firm and true friend. At times she would censure him (for he was not always according to her taste) ; it was all part of their intercourse and he did not attach much importance to it, nor she either ; from the very first she had always been his guardian. As yet he had not dared to say that he loved her ; there was no necessity for it, and, in fact, it was almost too sacred to be mentioned. He was as sure of her as of his own faith. He was a peasant, his chief characteristic was a certain trustful, solid collectiveness. God provided for his faith ; his well-being and future were provided for—of course also by God ; but through Josephine. In his eyes she was the cleverest, most beautiful and healthiest girl not only in the town but in the whole country, and she was very rich. This last must be taken into consideration too ; as a small boy he had been an ambitious dreamer, but now his dreams had a different bent.

His fellow-students knew all about it ; as well as Melancthon, they called him the "bishop-theme from the bay," or the "bay bishop." He had got accustomed to this, it was almost a necessity for him ; there was something child-like in his smiling trustfulness that suited him well ;

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then he was so handsome, with his fair, open face, and when that is the case it is quite excusable to be ambitious.

Now he felt that he had been hurled down from his secure and pleasant height ! Any one who having been safe and secure, for the first time is thoroughly defeated, feels so completely out of it all. The worst of this was that Josephine did not appear to wish to have anything to do with him ; he looked repeatedly across to her, but she went on arranging her flowers and grass just as if he did not exist.

At last it was exactly as though they all had glided away and he too were no longer there. He sat without seeming to sit, heard without hearing, saw without seeing. The supper was being got ready up before the house ; they all went up there as soon as the table was laid ; they ate, they drank, they laughed and made merry, but he was not with them, he stood there staring out across the bay—far, far away. A young man, clerk in some business, spoke to him about the routes of the different steamers and how badly they were managed ; a girl with crooked teeth, red hair in plaits and a freckled face (he had formerly been her master), assured him that sailors were by no means so well educated as one might expect from people who travelled so much. The hostess came and asked how it was he would not eat anything, and the host took wine with him ; in doing so they showed him the usual respect ! but both of them cast a hurried, searching glance at his eyes, which made him tremble. He felt they doubted.

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In his ceaseless and ever-increasing pain, he saw nothing but doubt and scorn on every side, even in the fact of the general merriment. Edward Kallem was especially full of fun, and they all collected round him. It was in his honour too (he had come home a fortnight ago) that the expedition had been got up. As in a dream, Ole saw that Josephine's flowers had been placed on the table, and he heard how every one praised the blending of their colours; she herself was sitting at a little stone table with two girl friends—was that to prevent his joining her? There was much noise and fun going on at the other side. He saw her talking and laughing, all the young men waiting upon her; Edward joined them several times; he made them laugh too. Ole noticed all this with a strange feeling of fear. The noise jarred on him, the laughter made him feel ashamed, he could not swallow a morsel, and the wine had a bad taste; every one seemed as though they were worked by machinery, the house, the bay, the schooner, the mountains, all seemed so overwhelmingly near.

A dead calm had set in, so that the whole party were obliged to walk back to town. They started on their walk singing and all together; but almost immediately some of the numerous summer visitors came pouring out from the houses along the road, and, as they were all acquaintances, they stopped to speak. The newcomers joined them and walked on with them; then came others, and each time they stopped, and each time the party broke up and became

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more divided. In that way he was able to keep behind without any one's noticing it. He could not bear their company and their merriment any longer.

Now it was that everything was, as it were, concentrated in Josephine. The being attacked and overthrown by Edward, the shame of this defeat, his wounded religious feelings . . . it all was due to the fact that she had not upheld him, neither by word nor by look ; had shunned him before, and now had gone and left him ! He could not stand that ; for she had grown to be so much, too much for him, he knew it and was not ashamed. That which once had been his highest aim, namely, to be a missionary, had fallen from him like scales, when he saw she no longer cared about it. Whenever his mother had said that he should never become a missionary, his answer was that God must be obeyed before man. But when Josephine, in her strong sort of way, had looked closer into the reality of things, he gave up all his wishes without her needing even to say a word on the subject. He said to himself that he would surely be punished for having so great a love for any one person. But he could not help it.

With these and thousands of similar thoughts in his mind, he lagged behind, and turned off from the road up into the wood ; there he lay down, waiting until their summer acquaintances should pass back again. He soon turned over, and lay with his face downwards, the cool blades of grass prickling both cheeks and forehead, and the half-wet earth he seemed to inhale suited his mood.

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All these tiny blades of grass were as nothing in the shade ; and so it was with him—through her he reached the sunny side of life, without her all was shadow.

A voice within him seemed to say her brother had taken her from him.

Her brother, who, until a very few days ago, had not cared a straw about her, whilst Ole had always been with her since they were children together, had rowed with her, read to her, been to her both brother and sister in one, and had faithfully written to her when they were separated ; her own brother had never done any one of all these things. Even his defeat of to-day he credited to her account ; for if he had not, for her sake, been so conscientious in working for his examination, to which he had been assisted by her father, then he would probably have known more about all those matters under discussion to-day—he would perhaps not have been defeated at all ; this, too, he suffered for the sake of his fidelity.

As long as Josephine was a child and half grown up Edward had seldom been together with her without teasing her. She was very thin, with large, black eyes, often uncombed hair, red hands, altogether scraggy ; he nicknamed her "the duckling," and once when she had hurt her foot and went about limping, "the lame duckling."

He could never really make her out, she was so defiant, and yet shy—kept always at a distance. And then, time upon time, she was the

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cause of his getting a beating. She considered it "just" to tell each time he did anything wrong. And if he beat her for telling, then it was "just" to tell about that too. He took a dislike to her. Soon, however, they were separated, through his leaving his father's house. After that unlucky day, when father and son met on the road to Store Tuft, the apothecary took pity on his old friend and, taking the boy from him, adopted him entirely as his own son. What the father had never been able to succeed in succeeded now. The boy was at once taken away from school, and allowed to devote himself to his chief interest, natural history. Chemical and physical analysis or botanical expeditions were his highest aim, and for two years he studied nothing but what belonged to those branches. After that he went through other necessary studies with a private master, and very quickly; he began his medical studies after passing his second examination. As long as he was at home he only saw his sister when she came across to the apothecary's to see him, and, as their interests were entirely opposed, their intercourse became almost *nil*. Later on, the apothecary used to take him abroad with him in the holidays; Edward was so clever at languages, which he certainly was not. It was not often, therefore, that the brother and sister met in their holiday time. But from the time that, as a student, he had first travelled abroad with the apothecary, and she saw her brother come home, grown-up, with new fashions, both in ideas and in dress, energetic, full of life, a very

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ideal, especially a woman's ideal of youth, from that time she had always secretly admired him. He, for his part, either overlooked her completely, or else teased her ; it cost her many an hour's torture, but she swallowed it all, so as to be allowed to be where he was, even if only quietly in a corner.

Ole understood her, though she never betrayed herself. To him, too, she spoke seldom of Edward without calling him "disgusting," "meddlesome," "chatterbox," &c., &c. But Ole's faithful attention to her every time she sat there neglected by her brother, and with wounded feelings heaped up "treasures" for him in her heart.

A great change had taken place in Edward—his inquisitiveness had become a desire for knowledge, his restlessness was now energy. But at the same time his sister also underwent a change to an extent that he knew nothing about. It was exactly two years and a half since he had seen her last ; she had been in France and Spain for two years, and in the last holidays, when she was at home, he had been away travelling in England with the apothecary ; this year, too, they had been away for a couple of months. This sister whom he now met again was like a stranger to him. He was much taken up with her after their first meeting.

She was not handsome, he told Ole, as soon as they two met (to Ole's greatest astonishment). But he never wearied talking of the new and peculiar sort of impression she produced up here among all the others. Their mother must surely have looked too much at some Spanish woman

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during the time before Josephine's birth. If it had not been for that indescribable something about the eyes which distinguishes one person from the other all the world over—if it had not been for that something about the eyes—she might very well have lived among Spaniards and been taken for their countrywoman. The effect of this in a Norwegian household may be imagined! She talked well, rapidly, and to the point; but, all the same, was rather silent—kept herself at a distance. She dressed conspicuously, liked bright colours, and was always in the height of fashion, thereby almost challenging people, but in all other respects she was timid and shy.

From this time Edward really became a brother to her. Their father was away, and during his absence she lived at the head-master's and was not always easily got at; but whenever it was possible they were together. She had a feeling that he wanted to study her thoroughly, so she was on her guard; but it flattered her greatly that, whenever there was any one present, his eyes always sought hers and he appealed to her in everything.

* * * * *

While Ole, in deep distress, pressed his face down in the grass in the little wood where he lay, he could see in his mind's eye Josephine at a ball, her brother dancing first with this one, then with the other—sometimes even several dances with the same partner, but with her only one little “turn,” out of compassion.

But now?

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Now she had become a precious sister to Edward, and she and Ole were to be separated.

Why should Edward break in upon and spoil their intercourse, he who knew so little about it?—taking to himself all manner of rights which he did not in the least deserve? Just after being together for a few days was he to decide who was suitable for her to be with, and who was not.

Why, before them all, had he thus attacked him, casting scorn and derision on his calling in life?—not only mocking him, but mocking God himself.

As this thought passed through Ole Tuft's mind, a strange and strong light seemed to rise up and spread over all the mountains far away on the other side of the bay. He felt it in the back of his neck as he lay there with his face buried in the grass. Then there seemed to come a whisper from over there, filling all the air around him, "What hast thou done with me?" •

Oh! how crushed he felt, he seemed forced down into the ground. Now he knew that his suffering was like a sharp razor cutting away all that was diseased out of his flesh. He had lost his cause to-day simply because he stood there as a liar. "Thou shalt have no other gods but me!" No, no, forgive me, spare me! "Thou with thy vain, sensual dreams! Let the night serve thee as it did Jacob, to wrestle with me, writhing worm that thou art!"

The air around him seemed full of the sound of a thousand wings.

It was not the first time that the solemnity of

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the Old Testament had come upon him from the heights and taken root in him. These questions of great or small ; as to whether he should hazard "the greatest"—or be contented, like every one else, with mediocrity—this was nothing new to him.

But were he to meet Josephine in good humour again, those questions would cease to exist, with one stroke of her hand she made them vanish. And such was the case now. Without any warning, it was as if a fresh protest from her came and overwhelmed him. Josephine would never have turned from him to-day because her brother wished it, never ! And if she had understood it in that way, she would have done just the opposite. No, she turned from him because he was such a poor creature—for nothing else. Perhaps, too, because she did not wish to be forced into a discussion, she was so very shy. Neither had she turned to her brother. She sat in the middle of the group in the garden, and later on, when they dined, she and a couple of girl friends had been at a separate table. And when the party broke up she had made no effort to be where her brother collected so many round him—why, in the world, had he not thought of that before ? She was true to him ; upon my word, she was true and faithful ! He rose up ; why, in the name of fortune, had he not seen that sooner ?

He had wished that she would help him one way or another—at least, would comfort him and show him how sorry she was for him. But all that sort of thing was utterly opposed to Josephine's

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nature. How could he even think of it? Especially as there had been all this disturbance and every one was on the lookout as to what she would do.

He had been a great stupid. Delighted with this discovery, he hopped down through the wood and across the ditch, on his homeward way, after the others.

Great heavens, how he loved her! He saw her before him as she was sometimes when she thought him too child-like; through all her majesty he could always catch a good, kind look from her!

The late sunset left no red sky behind, the night was dull and grey, a deserted road winding down hill; by the roadside were some small factories, the houses being up on the hill, poor places all of them, and a few shabby-looking summer villas here and there, low trees, and a few bushes spread about.

He saw it all without seeing it, occupied as he was with his own thoughts. Not a soul on the road—yes, far off in the distance was a solitary individual going toward the town. He slackened his pace so as not to overtake this person, and never noticed that besides that person walking in front of him was another advancing to meet him. At last he could distinguish one from the other. Surely—it could never be—was he mistaken? No, he recognised the hat, and then the walk, the whole figure, there was only one such! Josephine was coming back to fetch him! It was just like her.

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"But where have you been?" said she. Her large-featured face was flushed, her breath came quickly, her voice was rather hesitating, and the parasol she held in her left hand was not altogether steady. He did not answer; he gazed at her face, her dress, the feather in her hat, her tall, fine figure, till involuntarily she smiled; so much dumb admiration and gratitude would pierce through any kind of armour. "Josephine! Oh, Josephine!" Joy and admiration were reflected from the crown of his flat hat and down to his very boots. She went gaily up to him and laid her right hand on his left arm, pushing him gently forward; he was to walk on.

His face was all stained by the grass he had been burrowing in, she thought he had been crying: "You are silly, Ole," she whispered.

Such a grey summer's night, when nothing really sleeps nor yet is fully awake, gives one a strange, unsatisfied feeling. For these two it was as would be a dimly lighted room for two who were secretly engaged. She allowed her hand to remain resting on his arm, and when his eyes met hers she looked at him as though watching over a child.

"You see, I thought," said he, "I thought, only fancy I thought——" The tears stood in his eyes.

"You are very silly, Ole," whispered she again! And thus ended the storm of that day.

Her hand still rested on his arm; it looked as if she were leading him to prison. He could only just feel a very slight pressure, but it went to his

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very marrow. Now and then her silk dress just touched his leg, they were keeping step together, he seemed carried along by the electric current of her vicinity. They were utterly alone, and the silence round them was complete; they could hear their own steps and the rustling of the silk dress. He kept the arm on which her hand lay, painfully quiet, half afraid that the hand might fall down and be broken. There was just this one drawback—for there must always be something not quite perfect, that he felt an ever-increasing guilty desire to take her hand and tuck it under his arm in the usual way; he could have pressed it then. But he dared not do it.

They walked on and on. He looked upward and discovered there was no moon. "There is no moon," said he.

"It would have been lighter if there had been," answered she, smiling. "Much lighter." • Their voices had met and the sound of them mingled, floating together like birds in the air.

But just on that account they found it difficult to say more. As Ole walked along pondering over what he could venture to say next, he felt both touched and proud. He thought of that snowy Saturday evening long ago, when the other boys at school had treated him so badly, and he had fled away to Store Tuft; he thought of all his misery that day; but his promotion as it were dated from then, he had walked into the town from the other side, but with her on his arm—stop though, not quite. There had been the same drawback then too.

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Should he tell her? Would she not think it too outspoken.

"We are quite alone now, we too," thus cunningly would he try to lead up to it; but he could not depend on his voice, it would betray him. She did not answer him. Again there was a complete silence between them. Just fancy, then her hand of its own accord slipped quietly into his arm, in the usual way when two people are engaged. His whole frame quivered, and taking courage, he pressed it slightly; but did not dare to look at her. They walked on.

Soon the town lay before them as though under a veil, the ships' rigging rising up like so many towers; or like the pointed sort of rigging dredging ships always have; the houses stood in thick outline, no colouring visible; everything carefully packed up and put away, the mountains keeping guard over the whole. One long, faint, indistinct sound, a dull gleam through the dead-grey silence. "Will you not tell me something?" said she, rapidly, as though she could not possibly get out more just then. He felt quite relieved at this, and asked her if he should tell her—about light.

"Yes, about light," answered she; was it ironical?

He began, but could not do it clearly. The very first time that she asked him for a clearer explanation he felt that he could not give it, he was not sufficiently at home with the subject. "No," he said, "let me finish my story about Jeanne d'Arc; you know we were interrupted yesterday."

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"Yes, let us take Jeanne d'Arc!" said she, merrily, and laughed.

"Do you not wish that?"

"Yes, yes!" And she said that more kindly, as if wishing to make up for the first. Then he told her the end of Jeanne d'Arc's story, as it was told in a newly published book which he had borrowed from her father in the holidays. This was a subject that suited him; his west country accent, with the sing-song rise and fall in the voice, his carefully studied use of words, peculiar to one who had once been a peasant, heightened by the country dialect, though it no longer was so noticeable, impressed one with the idea that it was the words of some old writer; his soft and gentle Melancthon-face was dreamy; she looked up at him, and each time seemed to see deep down into his pure heart.

And in this manner they reached the town. The story had taken a hold on her too, and they both became so eager that they were not aware that they might possibly meet some one, and that they now had houses on each side of them; he just lowered his voice a little, but went on telling his story.

But when they came near the street where his aunt lived, and up which he ought to turn, he stopped, without having finished his story. Would he be allowed to take her home? The head-master's house was a little further on; if not, then he ought to leave her here. Now, this was not a question of this evening only.

Just on this account she thought of it too; she

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had never approved of that sort of nonsense, of being taken to one's own door when the other person's way lay quite in an opposite direction. From their childhood she had always had the same feeling, because she had been teased about him. But she knew that for him it was a great treat.

They both walked along the short bit of road that remained, and worked themselves up to a state of excitement. Shall we say good-bye here, or—? What had originally been so childish had now grown, by dint of repetition, to something of great importance. She could not account for it, but as they stood at the cross-roads, she quietly took her gloveless hand from his arm and offered it to him in farewell greeting. She saw his disappointment. And to make up for it her large eyes beamed on him, her hand grasped his heartily, and, "Thanks for a pleasant evening!" said she, in quite a different tone of voice from what she had used for the last few years. The words seemed to fly from heart to heart like a life-long promise, and such was their meaning. She thanked him now and always for his faithful love. He stood there, quite pale. She saw it, and seemed to meditate something—took her hand away, and went. On the hill, she turned again to look at him, thankful that neither by word nor deed had he tried to do anything but what she wished. She nodded to him, he raised his hat.

A few minutes later she stood in her own room, much too warm and too wide-awake to think of

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going to bed. She did not wish to sleep; at all events, she wanted first to see the sun on the roofs, or at least daylight. Her room looked out on the courtyard, the playground and gymnasium at the end; some gymnastic apparatus stood outside too. Looked at from the street side, her bedroom was in the second storey, but seen from the court it was on the first floor; hundreds of times, as a child, she had jumped out of the window instead of going out through the door. She opened the window, and even thought of jumping out now and walking up and down the court. She would, in reality, have preferred walking about the whole night with Ole; but he could not understand that. Perhaps it was because he had not proposed it that she had dismissed him up the street.

But as she thought more about it, she did not dare to venture out into the yard. It happened sometimes that young men coming home from a country walk or a boating expedition, or jaunt of some kind, would take it into their heads, as they passed the old school-yard, to turn into the playground of their boyish days and have a swing on the ropes; she would not like to meet those half-tipsy young men. She took off her hat, and remained standing in the window, leaning forward, gazing out after what had just happened, and which seemed to draw her outward in spite of herself.

She heard steps on the stairs outside, and then in the sand, the way in to her. Could it be Ole? Was he sentimental enough to wish to

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look up at her window? He must not come. God help him if he did come! She listened eagerly; no—those steps were too rapid; it was—she knew it as he stood there, it was her brother.

Yes, it was Edward who came. He was not astonished at seeing her, but came straight up to her. And when he had come up to the open window he stretched up his right hand to her, and she took it. His eyes squinted a little, a sure sign that he was excited. "I am glad you are still up; otherwise I should have been obliged to knock." His eyes looked searchingly into hers, and he did not loose her hand. "Have you just got back?"

"Yes, just this moment." All at once she felt herself to be in his power; he might have questioned her about anything in the world and she would have answered, with those eyes of his looking at her like that.

"When I saw you were no longer with the rest of the party, I knew you had gone back to Ole."

"Yes."

He stopped speaking, his voice shook: "I behaved badly; I suppose now you are engaged?"

There was a pause, but her answer gleamed forth directly in her eyes. "I think so," she said.

Lovingly, yet full of grief, he gazed at her. She felt the greatest desire to cry aloud. Had she done wrong? She was dreadfully alarmed. Then he took her head between both his hands,

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and bending down, kissed her on the forehead. She burst into tears and clasped her arms tightly round his neck; they lay thus cheek against cheek.

"Well, well—if it is settled, then—I congratulate you, Josephine, dear Josephine." They pressed closer to each other, then they parted.

"I leave to-day," whispered he, taking hold of her hand; she gave them both to him.

"To-day, Edward?"

"I have behaved stupidly. Good-by, Josephine."

She disengaged her hands to take her handkerchief and pressed it to her face. "I will come and say good-bye," she sobbed.

"Don't do that! No—not again!" And to get it over quickly, he embraced and kissed her once more and left her without once looking round.

II

NEXT COUPLE FORWARD

IN March of the following year, just as Edward Kallem was preparing to pass the second part of his medical examination, he came across something else which completely occupied his thoughts.

We must now tell all about it.

At the time when his desultory studies in natural history concentrated themselves more and more on physiology, at that time the cleverest physiologist was a young realistic student, Thomas Rendalen, somewhat older than Edward Kallem. In itself, it was seldom that a non-medical student distinguished himself in that branch, so that everybody was struck by it, and of course Edward Kallem too; but he did not on that account become any closer acquainted with Rendalen, who was not one of those who make themselves accessible to all.

It was later on, indeed not until after New Year (as they happened to be on the same steamer coming back after the Christmas holidays), that they got to know each other better. The first evening that Kallem went to see Thomas Rendalen in his own rooms, he stayed the night there. And

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a few evenings after, when Rendalen came to him they kept going backward and forward between the two lodgings (which were close together) till between three and four o'clock in the morning. Edward Kallem had never before come across such a genial sort of fellow, and Rendalen went up to him early one morning, before Kallem had gone out to the hospital, just to tell him that of all his friends and acquaintances Kallem was the one he liked best.

In reality Rendalen's was a stronger nature than Kallem's, a mixture of savagery and tamedness, of passion, melancholy, and music, with great powers of communicativeness, but with recesses in his character which were seldom, if ever, opened. Unbounded energy—and then again so utterly devoid of power that he could do nothing; the whole machinery was out of order, as though one of the wheels were broken. Not a single spot at right angles, nothing but irregularities on the whole landscape of his character; but the light of a great mind was over the whole. However incalculable were the surroundings, or unpleasant the disappointments, his individuality, with its strict sense of justice, was so winning that one could not do otherwise than be fond of him.

His chief concern was for all belonging to schools, and for education to its very centre; to carry each separate child safe through the "dangerous age" which comes at different times. Many suffered greatly at that time, wounds were made but not easily healed; those who lived comfortably and in better circumstances could

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pass the ordeal unhurt ; but they were hardly in the majority. All education and teaching was to be concentrated in forming a good and moral man, that was his first and last thought.

He was indefatigable in lecturing on ways and means of education ; in discussing all school arrangements and the work to be done in the homes. His mother owned a widely-known girls' school in one of the towns on the coast, and he was anxious to take possession of it so as to be able to carry out his plans ! His great aim was a system of mixed schools ; but first the teaching of all the principal branches must undergo a change—be made easier, not suitable only for the most talented pupils. And he intended practising all this at the girls' school.

He possessed a tolerably large collection of school material from America and from several European countries, and he kept on adding to it ; besides that, he owned a whole library of school literature. He lived together with one Vangen, a student of theology who had finished his studies at Christmas, but was just going up for his practical examination ; but although between them they had three rooms, they were all three full of Rendalen's library and collections.

His appearance was remarkable. Red-haired (but rather a light colour) and the ends sticking up straight in the air, freckled, and with blinking grey eyes under white short-haired eyebrows which were hardly visible ; the nose was broad and rather turned up, the mouth pinched ; short, freckled hands, every finger denoting energy ;

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not tall, but splendidly made ; his walk, on well turned out feet, was very light. Wherever he went he was the best of all gymnasts, and could climb the ropes like none other ; Edward, too, who had always been fond of gymnastics, became doubly eager through his example ; for nothing could equal Rendalen's power to win others for whatever he was fond of. At this time his great passion was walking on his hands ; Kallem could do this to his great admiration ; probably that put the climax to the respect that Rendalen had for him.

They had many subjects in common ; they were both specialists, and both powerful in whatever they undertook ; modern in their way of thinking, and with the courage of reformers ; both were particular to the last degree about their persons ; they dressed with taste ; Rendalen, however, thought rather too much about it. Both had the same quick way of thinking, guessing in advance the half of what was said ; both in that way perfecting each other's knowledge ! Rendalen was musical, played the piano in a most masterly way, and sang well. Kallem sang still better, and was encouraged in it by Rendalen.

Although Rendalen could with heart and soul give himself up to one single object or individual, still there was a reserve about him which no one could penetrate. He was very fond of Vangen, his adopted brother ; but one could always see that there was a decided something that kept them apart. In this respect Kallem was entirely to Rendalen's satisfaction ; he too, in the midst

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of all his devotion to any one, had the same kind of stand-offishness about him.

But there was difference enough between them both to keep up the novelty of their intercourse, at the same time rendering it rather difficult. Nearly all the difficulties proceeded from Rendalen, for Kallem was more pliable and accommodating. When Rendalen was in the humour he would play by the hour together, just as though no one were in the room; one might make up one's mind to go away at once. He it was who always gave the keynote to all their moods. He was capricious and could have long spells of melancholy; when one of these fits was on him few could get a word out of him. There was a marvellous power of work in him whenever he was taken up about anything that occupied his mind—and then suddenly, good-bye to the whole thing! Were he in a communicative mood and really in good spirits, the very air around him seemed sparkling with electricity.

For Kallem the study of medicine meant fresh discoveries daily, and on account of their mutual physiological studies they both faithfully interchanged ideas, each from his side. During the months of January and February they met nearly every evening; at any rate, at the gymnasium from six to seven o'clock; after that they would often sup together—oftenest at Rendalen's rooms, as he had a piano.

In the early part of March Rendalen's mother came to pay him a visit; she lodged with her son's landlord, a new-comer to the town. He

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was a native of Nørland, blind and paralysed down one side, and had an excessively musical wife ; she was very young, in fact almost a child—the strangest couple imaginable. Rendalen often spoke of them. As long as his friend's mother was in town, Kallem kept away ; each time they left the gymnasium, Kallem could see that Rendalen did not wish to have him with him. But when, after a stay of eight days or so, the mother went home again, still things did not change ; either Rendalen went on with his gymnastics longer than Kallem, or else he left after a very few exercises ; it was clear that he did not wish for Kallem's company. The latter thought that he was in one of his melancholy moods.

But one morning, Kallem having* come home earlier than usual (as a rule he was out the whole forenoon), he heard the bell ring, the servant open the door, and then Rendalen's footstep in the passage. He came in hurriedly, was gloomy and taciturn ; his business was—should they change lodgings ?

Kallem knew him so well now, and was so good-natured, that he did not show the least surprise, and never even asked his reasons for wishing to change ; he only said that his two small rooms would surely not be large enough for Rendalen's collections and his piano—and for Vangen ? Or, were he and Vangen no longer going to live together ? Yes, they were ! But there was a large room adjoining Kallem's two rooms, and for long Rendalen had had his eye on

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that. He knew the landlady would be glad to let it. It would suit him perfectly. Only fancy what it would be to play in that large room!

"Have you spoken now to the landlady about it?"

"No, but I am just going to her," and off he rushed. They both came back together, the landlady and he; a few minutes after, all was settled! In the afternoon they moved! When the good-natured Vangen came hurrying home from his dinner, there sat Kallem in dressing-gown and slippers in the first room to the right, and announced to him that Rendalen had gone to live in Sehested Street, where he, Kallem, used to live; they had changed lodgings. They both laughed.

"And yet he was very comfortable here," said Vangen; but that was the only remark he made.

Of course Edward Kallem speculated much on the reason of this hurried move, and thought he would have a good talk with the servant each time she came to see to the stove or to bring in his lunch or supper, both which meals he took at home; she looked as if she knew something. Marie had a peculiar smile that seemed to say: "Oh, I know the lot of you—you too, you rogue!" He got that, the very first time she opened the door for him. She had eyes that were more than half covered by the lids which hung over them in folds. The nose was a turn-up and seemed to drag the mouth upward into a stiff smile, the upper lip projected, showing a row of teeth for which there was hardly room, they glistened through each

smile. Everything he said seemed to have a hidden meaning of fun and nonsense, it shot forth from under her eyelids and played about the corners of the mouth. The voice was a soft one. Otherwise a steady girl, well made, clever as old Nick himself, but prudent and cautious both in speech and ways, for all her laughing criticisms. But her laugh seemed always on the lookout for one. When he said: "I am Edward Kallem, I am to live in Rendalen's room," she answered, smilingly: "Oh!" just as if she had known all his secrets from the time he was a boy. If he mentioned Rendalen, she looked as if she had a whole room full of jokes about him; and yet—he never got anything out of her.

The house where he lived now was a corner house, almost opposite the university. The door of the house was in the same street into which Kallem's rooms looked too. They were on the second floor and had the same entrance as his landlord had; that is to say, one of the rooms—the other one, his bed-room, had its own private entrance. Rendalen had had a third room, the corner room further in. Kallem put his card on the door leading into the little hall, below a large door-plate bearing the name of Sören Kule; that was the landlord's name! Next day being Sunday, he went to call on him.

There sat the paralysed, blind man in a large roller-chair. The unfortunate man was still young, barely over thirty, very heavily built, and heavy both in face and in speech. His very "Come in!" when Kallem knocked, was heavy.

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Kallem introduced himself, the other sat immovable and answered slowly: "Indeed, I am blind. And I can't move about much either." This was said with a Norland accent; each syllable jerked out and jogging heavily along like a London brewer's dray-horse. It was a clever, but full, large-featured face; he came probably of a healthy race. Kallem was sufficiently a doctor to be able to see at once why he was paralysed and blind. A quantity of engravings and photographs from Spain, hanging on the walls, gave him the idea that it was probably *there* he had received as a gift what that most gallant people distribute with such hospitality.

"Won't you sit down?" he said, at last. His healthy side brisked up as he turned and looked toward a door to the left; "Ragni!" he called. Nobody answered and nobody came. His voice, as well as his seeming indifference and stolid quiet, seemed to make the silence duller. Kallem sat there and looked about him. Were those children's toys? It seemed to him surely he heard children's voices? Were there children *here*?

"Ragni!" repeated he once more, slowly. Then, more gently: "Perhaps they are in the kitchen busy with the dinner."

Again, the same dull, heavy silence; the sound of bells from the street broke through it for a moment, but only to make it all the more evident afterward. The furniture was too heavy and dark for a small Norwegian room in winter; and it was faded and worn. The engravings and

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photographs were in large frames, which, however, did not fit very well, so that both dust and damp had got in and spoilt the paper. The children's toys and a piano were the most noticeable things; the piano seemed to be perfectly new and by one of the best Parisian makers, it was certainly a concert-grand. "Your wife plays so beautifully?"

"Yes."

Kallem knew that she had devoted herself to the study of music since she was a child, and just to find something to talk about he took up the subject. "She has studied at the conservatoire in Berlin?"

"Yes."

There was a noise of chairs being pushed about in the room to the right, the one adjoining the corner room. Kallem then took that up as a subject for conversation. "I hear I am to have a neighbour in the corner room?"

"Yes."

"A relation of yours, I believe?"

"Yes, an aunt."

Again Sören Kule looked to the left, and called out in an indifferent sort of way: "Ragni!" Nobody answered and no body came. "I fancied I heard a door open outside," he said, as though apologising for having called. Kallem got up then and said good-bye.

A few days afterward he gave Rendalen an amusing description of his visit. Rendalen laughed; he had not often been there himself; but had heard much about Sören Kule. He de-

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clared the fellow might go to the devil for him, he would rather not talk about him at all ; he sat down to the piano and began to play.

A few days later, who should Kallem meet in the entrance but his brother-in-law in spe, Mr. Ole Tuft, now candidate in theology, come to town to pass his so-called practical examination.

Grand meeting and recognition ! The one had no idea of the change of lodgings that had taken place, nor the other that Ole Tuft had come to town. Kallem begged him to go in with him, and heard then that Tuft was there for the first time ; the landlord's aunt had moved in yesterday, and it was her Ole had been visiting. Edward Kallem understood at once what community she belonged to, and he changed the subject. He asked further whether he knew Sören Kule ? No, only through hearing of him from his aunt ; all the family were from the Norland. Then who was Sören Kule ? He was a well-to-do fish-dealer who became blind and partially paralysed ; was obliged to sell his business and had bought this house in Christiania to make a living by it and by other things as well. They had several relations in town, and had only been there since October. Did Ole Tuft know what had caused his paralysis and blindness ? No. Kallem told him there could hardly be a doubt on the matter. Ole Tuft was quite shocked.

" How could he dare marry then ? And twice."

" Has he been married twice ? "

" Yes, he married a second time about six months or a year ago—his late wife's sister."

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"Then the children are by the first wife?"

"Yes. But the present wife is hardly more than a child herself; just fancy, she is eighteen and has been married nearly a year!"

"Was he like this when he married again?"

"No, I think not. He was in ill-health but not so bad as now. There are not many who can understand how it came about?"

"Have you seen her?"

"No, but my aunt says she is a delicate little creature, and very musical. She has played in public."

"Indeed, up in the north?"

"They are said to be so very critical up there." Then he began again on the subject of the marriage. "The parents probably arranged it for the children's sake."

Kallem very nearly answered, "Then, of course, they are clergy folk;" but he recollected in time. He only said: "One can't accuse her of being too particular."

They conversed a little on indifferent subjects; no mention was made of Josephine. Shortly after Ole went in to find his aunt, whom he had come to call upon. As it happened Kallem was at home that forenoon and he heard the landlord's wife play. She began with scales and arpeggios and still more scales; but then came a piece so wonderfully well executed that he set his door ajar so as to hear better. Her playing was more like singing. How in all the world could a woman young like she, and full of artistic and lyric feeling, marry such a mass of corruption? Here was a problem

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which he would have had Rendalen solve, but Rendalen knew nothing. However, he was in good spirits that day, spoke in raptures about her playing; there was not so much power in it but it was full of song, and a poetical charm of colouring which was unequalled. He could play a Russian piece of hers, "after a fashion," he added; he played it perfectly. Kallem wanted to know something about her appearance.

"She looks—stupid!" cried he. "God forgive me for saying it—stupid! Her forehead might possibly save her, but she hides it entirely with her hair. I said so to her; 'Up with your hair,' said I. Her eyes, too, might save her. But never in my life have I seen any one so shy about her eyes."

"Has she good eyes?"

"Good Heavens, her eyes are of the many-voiced kind! Some eyes sing as it were in unison or at the most for two voices; but some there are that throw forth chords of bright harmony. If she looks up when she is playing you will feel it! Generally her eyes are on a level with the feet of the table, or piercing holes in the corners, or the stove alight. Sometimes, though, they look up high along the walls like a rat that cannot escape!" He was amused at his own description and began to play a Halling.* "Wonderful that such a musical nature can—come, we must not be sentimental, old fellow!" He intended going to the theatre and took Kallem with him.

A week passed and still Kallem had not seen

* A Norwegian country-dance.

her, although he had tried what he could to bring it about. But he was out at a dance one night—the son of the house was a fellow-student of his—the latter came up to him whilst a “tour d’inclination” was going on, bringing two ladies with him, and asked Kallein whether he would choose the “kernel of a nut” or a “dog-rose”? This was not particularly clever, but he chose the “dog-rose.” This “dog-rose” had a musical forehead and prettily arched eyebrows; otherwise she was silent and insignificant. Rather tall, with sloping shoulders, pretty arms, not actually fat, but well-shaped; the same might be said of her whole person. She danced well, but seemed as if she wished to get away from him as quickly as possible; he brought her back to her place without her having so much as looked at him. He was much surprised therefore when she came and fetched him out in the next “tour.” Probably she only knew very few people and those few were very likely engaged. She looked about her shyly and then came forward with timid steps and curtsied; still she did not look up, she seemed positively afraid, and so it struck him he would be kind and sit down beside her. But whatever he said to her she never answered anything but “yes,” “no,” “indeed,” “perhaps,” which soon proved too much of a good thing for so-much-sought-after a cavalier as he; so he left her. Again he was offered his choice between the “nut-kernel” which he had despised and a “bon-bon,” and this time he chose the “nut-kernel.” He liked her much better; she was a lively, round, little thing, and spoke with

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a mixture of Norland and Bergen accent. He soon learned that her father was a native of Bergen, but was now a clergyman in the Norland district. She was staying here in a town with her sister, and very often went to balls ; for they had so many relations—her voice rose and fell in true Norland fashion ; but unfortunately she would soon have to be going home again ; they were nervous about her up there in the north ; nor did the old parents like to be left alone. Of course Kallem did the polite and pretended to be highly amused, they became such good friends that—She told him with a great flow of words how she had come to town so as to help her sister to get settled ; her sister was not at all practical, which *she* was ; she could do nothing but play the piano, that sister of hers ; she had been accustomed to it since her childhood, and had studied two years in Berlin. Then Kallem became all attention, and it turned out that her sister was the partner he had danced with first and had thought so tiresome ; his landlady, Fru Ragni Kule ! The “nut-kernel,” it must be observed, was not her real sister ; they were children of different marriages. And the “nut-kernel” was not the eldest, as he had imagined ; on the contrary, her sister was nearly nineteen, and she was a little more than seventeen.

Immediately he went and danced with Fru Kule, and remarked with much surprise that she was his landlady. Was she aware of that ? Was that why she had chosen him to dance with before ? She felt as if she were taken in the act

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of committing a crime, but could think of no excuse to make. "But why did you not tell me who you were?" continued he, insisting.

She felt still more overwhelmed by this fresh sin of having kept silence, and could not possibly get out a word. Then he said, rather rudely and impatiently :

"Perhaps you have some difficulty in speaking?"

She turned very pale; there was something unspeakably unhappy in her startled look. His rudeness was the natural consequence of his contempt for any one who could lower themselves by such a marriage as hers was. But his sympathy was so thoroughly aroused by her pallor and helplessness that he hastened to say: "To be sure, I know that you possess the gift of a language which is easier for you than for most people—" and so he talked on in an easy, natural way about her music, made her sit down, told her that he had heard her play, and that Rendalen was such a competent judge; he turned the conversation upon all the world-renowned artists he had ever heard, and succeeded in making her join in; of course she had heard so many of them. By degrees she gained so much confidence that she even ventured to ask after Rendalen; she had not seen him at all since he had moved. He was all right, and then he described all Rendalen's peculiarities till she was obliged to laugh. She did not look "stupid" when she laughed, far from it. For a moment, too, there was a gleam in the eyes as of "many rays."

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"Why did Rendalen move?" asked she, and there was something of the singing Norland accent in her voice too, but less than in her sister's. It was rather a weak voice, but at the same time so very sweet. He answered her with a question. But no, she knew nothing; and then she looked full at him; those were eyes! "Was it about the room?"

"About the room?" repeated he.

"Yes, I mean when he heard that my aunt wanted to live here—my husband's aunt," she added, correcting herself, and suddenly she became shy again.

"Had they given him notice to leave?"

"No, certainly not."

"Then he could not possibly be offended."

She quite agreed to that too. But Rendalen had never even been to say good-bye. She never quite got rid of her shyness; it suited her though, as sometimes a veil can suit a face.

"Did you see much of his mother?"

"Yes," said she, and smiled.

"Why do you smile?"

"Well, perhaps it is hardly right of me, but she was so like a man." She was ashamed after she had said this, and would gladly have taken back her words; she had only meant that she was such a clever woman. But Kallem began joking her about it; she was forced to laugh again, and as before said, it was sweet to see and hear her laugh. "You see you *can* talk!" She glanced up at him; was he making fun of her? Suddenly he remembered that Rendalen had told

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her she ought to wear her hair off her forehead, and it was off this evening! Oh-ho!

She was really very pretty! To think of his not having found it out at once! And to think, that others had not seen it and spoken about it. It was true that her face was undeveloped and child-like, and the slender figure rather too thin. Her forehead was lovely; the eyebrows were delicately arched, but they were fair and not strongly marked. There was a difficulty in getting a look at the eyes; but now he knew that they were so confiding in all their grey-blue shyness, and they spoke volumes. Cheeks, chin, and mouth were soft and undecided; the latter always slightly open; it was short, too, which made it so "sweet." The nose was nothing much, but it was slightly crooked. Her hair was not very thick, but it had a pretty reddish shade in it. But her complexion! It was so dazingly white one could not take one's eyes from it once one had found it out; but the thing was, one did not notice it unless the colour of the dress helped one or the light was dim; she wore no ornaments, not even a bracelet. The wrists were such as would belong to long, narrow hands, which he would have liked to see. "So you love music more than anything else?"

"Yes," answered she, "it is all that I can do." She looked down. He wondered what there was he might question her on that would not make her feel ashamed. But he had better have a care—there he sat falling in love as fast as he could. Unfortunately he was obliged to leave her to go

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and dance with, and talk to, others. As soon as he left her it was as though he would never find her again; she seemed to become invisible. He came back to her as soon as he could for propriety's sake. She evidently did not object; she was a little more confiding, even looked at him once or twice and smiled right up into his eyes. Fancy that! It was more than Rendalen could have aspired to. His falling in love began through her being so shy, and increased as she became more confiding. He asked if he might be allowed to see the ladies home. Surely he had a better right to it than any one else as she was his landlady. She accepted his offer at once; she never hesitated. It was true, she said, that her nephew, the young man who had first offered Kallem the choice between a "nut-kernel" and a "dog-rose" was going with them too, but that they could both come.

"Yes, of course we can!" said he gaily, thinking secretly that the nephew should take charge of the "nut-kernel."

It was a thick, dark evening, the snow falling slightly. The star-like snow-flakes floated slowly and singly down as though each one had its own place and was bent on a special errand; not a breath of wind came to disturb them. Both ladies were well wrapped up and had Laplander shoes on. The music and dancing were still in full swing when they met, and there was much merry laughter among all the young people on the stairs and in the corridors; outside was the noise of bells from the sledges come to fetch

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the guests. The "nephew," being the host of the evening, could not leave so early, but he found some one to take his place; this other young man gave his arm to his lady, and they set off down hill at a run; but when Kallem would have done the same his young landlady was frightened and clung to him, as she was forced along running, and begged and implored him not to do it. It was just as though she did not see properly. He stopped and asked if that were the case. No; but she was so terribly afraid of falling.

"You seem to be nervous and timid altogether."

"Yes, I know I am," said she, truthfully. She was sweet enough, but in reality a bit of a prude. Then they walked on for a while in silence; they could see nothing of the other two. Bah! thought he, there is no use being offended, I suppose she can't help it. "It is not one o'clock yet," said he.

"No, but the youngest child is not very well; the servant is sitting up with her, but she has to get up early to-morrow morning." The North-country sing-song in her voice seemed to carry him far away out to sea.

"I miss the open sea so much now in the winter," said he; "here everything is ice-bound. I suppose it is always so in the West."

She told him that when she was at Berlin, and particularly after she had been playing, she could almost hear the sea at times. "But is it not a delightful thing that the sea always freshens one up when one is near it, and makes one melancholy

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when one thinks of it?" Just then something came driving past them at great speed; they had to get out of the way and she pulled him with her to the extreme edge of the road as three sledges, one after the other, dashed past them at a terrific rate.

They continued their walk, listening to the sleigh bells as they died away in the distance; again there was that complete silence necessary to attract attention to the falling snow-flakes.

"One ought really never to talk whilst snow is falling," said she.

Then the other two waited for them and the conversation was kept up for the time by the "nut-kernel" and the two gentlemen, till they came to a hill which the first couple took at full speed. By and by they saw them again through the veil of snow, but could hear nothing of them. But as the street became more inhabited, and the traffic greater, the couples kept closer together, and there was an end to all that had been amusing in their walk.

After that evening his impression of her seemed like a part of nature's scenery; she was blended with the starry snow-flakes; never had he met or seen anything so white and so pure. All that she had said about the sea and the falling snow was full of musical imagination; at last her whole person was enveloped in a sort of dim haze. As each of these pearls of first impressions rose up from the depths of his soul, his every sense seemed to be enamoured. He seemed to feel her presence in all the rooms; he

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started every time a door was opened ; and if there came a soft footstep along the passage he thought it was hers ; he felt it through his whole being. He was really rather afraid of meeting her again, in case the picture should lose its charm. And that was exactly what happened. Five or six days after, as he was coming out of the university, he met her with her sister and two little children ; the street was crowded, so he neither saw nor recognised them till they were quite close. He bowed ; the "nut-kernel" smiled and returned his bow, but her sister blushed very red and forgot to bow : at that moment she looked anything but clever. He stopped to thank them for the pleasant evening they had spent together, and began talking to the one sister ; the other bent down to the children—two sweet little girls, dressed out like dolls, one about three, the other four years old. He invited them into a confectioner's for refreshments ; the offer was accepted after a good deal of hesitation ; but the married sister never raised her eyes, and he could hardly induce her to sit down. Out of pure shyness and uneasiness she worried the children so that they became impatient. He offered them cakes and wine ; but she could not make up her mind what she would have, and at last allowed her sister to choose. Her face was framed in by a bonnet with silk flaps ; the forehead quite disappeared, and her face became round and insignificant ; her figure was concealed by clothes which were all much too large for her (he heard later that they had belonged to her late sister). It was

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only when he began to notice the children—he had a wonderful gift that way, for he was fond of children—that they really made friends again ; it happened down on the floor, too, because the youngest child had made a terrible mess of itself with a cake full of whipped cream, which the mother had most injudiciously chosen for it. There they were now, both drying the child with their pocket-handkerchiefs, and the mother thanking him over and over again, with a guilty feeling that it had been her fault. The child, who so blissfully had made itself in such a mess, asked for more cake of the same kind and would not be content with any other ; and Kallem (though he knew it was not good for the child to have so much) readily agreed to it ; but he took the child on his lap, asked for a napkin, and watched carefully over it until the last bite had disappeared. She stood by humbly taking a lesson. Then the child asked for another cake, to which Kallem also agreed. Then the eldest of the two, who had patiently been watching her sister eat her cakes, now ventured to ask for one ; so he took her up on his other knee and fed them both. Everybody enjoyed themselves thoroughly while this important business was going on ; even Fru Kule joined in the laugh. And as before said, when she laughed she was very “sweet.” The three grown-up ones drank each another glass of wine, and as they walked home Kallem carried the youngest child in his arms. He became fast friends with the little thing ; her stepmother was more courageous after she had had her wine, and

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said: "Is she not a dear wee thing, my little Juanita?" She stretched her hand up to the child, who took it in her thick little glove, and kept tight hold of it as they walked along.

He carried the little one upstairs, and was careful to show her where his room was, and invited them both to come and pay him a visit the next day, which was Sunday. Directly after his dinner he went out and bought some oranges, apples, figs, and other dried fruits, so as to have something for them when they came.

"Is she not a dear wee thing, my little Juanita?" This sentence, with a little of her north-country sing-song in it, he set to music and went about humming it every time he thought of her. Her voice, her eyes looking up at the child, and her hand stretched out to it, were all part of melody: "Is she not a dear wee thing, my little Juanita?" became the refrain of his life; he taught it to Rendalen, too; they greeted each other with it when they met at the gymnasium in the evenings. But Edward Kallem kept to himself the notion he had that she had been so shy because she had met him again—perhaps because it was broad daylight. He mentioned, too, that she looked so funny in the clothes that were so much too large for her; they seemed to have been made for a young, growing girl; but he never said a word about how uneasy she had grown when he looked at her in the confectioner's shop.

The children often came to see him; he gave them oranges and candied fruit, and walked on his hands and jumped over the chairs, and they

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were all tremendously happy. But the servant spoilt everything ; he could distinctly read the following in her smile : " You are a rogue ! You are doing all this for their mother's sake."

He was coward enough to tell her that the children were not to come to him for a while. It cut him to the heart as he sat there the following evening and heard how the eldest one opened the door to the passage to run in to him, but was caught and carried back crying. He rang for the servant and told her to give the children the remains of what he had bought for them. She took the things from him but said : " Is it not too much ?" and looked at him with a cunning smile ; he could have beaten her. But then he thought to himself, " If she expects me no matter what I do, then the children may just as well come !" And the following evening he fetched them in himself on the morrow.

One day he met her sister, who was going out. She nodded brightly to him and said : " Thanks to our last treat ! Fancy," she added, " in a few days I am going away."

Then he suggested that it would be quite the correct thing for them to go and have a little farewell at the confectioner's. She agreed with him, and they settled that they would all meet the next day, the children too, and have it all over again just like the last time. And so they did. Fru Kule was not quite so shy as the other day, Kalle himself was in the best of spirits, and the children were uproarious. He was full of the wildest, maddest love fancies as they went merrily

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home—he dancing along with Juanita on his head, and teaching the sisters to sing, “Is she not a dear wee thing, my little Juanita?” •

He was at the railway station the day the sister was to leave. Several of their relations and friends were there to say good-bye. Both the sisters were very unhappy; the one to be left behind perhaps the most so; she wept unceasingly, even after the train had gone. For a moment he thought of going away and leaving the relations alone together, but she said: “Oh, no, don’t go!” And yet there was no reason for her wishing him to stay; she walked home beside him and the others, crying all the way; and when the others left them and went their own way, and he and she stood before their door, she could find nothing to say, but just went on upstairs. On the stairs he asked her if she and the children would like to go for a drive; it might cheer her up a little. She only shook her head. “To-morrow perhaps?” asked he, respectfully, as he opened the door for her. She went in, but came back to say, “Thank you, to-morrow!” gave him her hand and a look from her dear eyes full of tears.

He fancied he could tell from her deep distress that she must feel lonely. Not perhaps in everyday life, because her imagination kept her time occupied; but when anything out of the common happened, rousing her and awakening her from her dreams, then she would look around and see that she was forsaken.

The next day he took her and the children out in a sledge and drove them himself. After the

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drive he went in to see Kule, who thanked him in his heavy sort of way for being so kind to the children. They showed Kallem all their toys, and Kule asked his wife to play a piece when the children were sent away ; he sat himself, smoking a long pipe, which his wife usually had to fill for him ; Kallem had done it now in her stead. Kallem saw then, for the first time, a stout kitchen-maid, an elderly, masculine-looking woman, who sang in a northern dialect, like birds shrieking over the sea. She was both cook and Kule's attendant. Apparently the wife was allowed entire liberty in whatever concerned herself, that is to say, the children and her music. At this moment she was playing that same piece by the Russian composer which he had heard from his own room, and perhaps better. Not because he was particularly attentive ; he was looking at her. The upper part of the face now flashing down over the keys and music was very different to how he knew it ; probably it was like this Rendalen had seen her. How much she would have to go through before the lower part of the face was equally developed ? A few days ago he had had a letter from a cousin who lived at Madison, in Wisconsin : he had been made professor at the university there, and his wife, a Norwegian lady, studied under him. Something of the kind would be necessary to bring life and shape into these dull cheeks and weak chin, that vacillating mouth with the cracked lips. But how touching it was to see all this child-like dependence. Close by he saw the husband's huge hands resting on the

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arm of his chair—he lay back in the chair like a dead river-god in breeches. Whilst she was playing, the door to the right was opened, and in came the third supernatural, north-country being, an old lady with white hair, a large round face, and horn spectacles ; this was the aunt, she was taller than Kallem, and stout in proportion to her height. The young wife moved about amongst them like a pleasure-yacht among Atlantic steamers laden to sinking-point. She looked upon Kallem now as an intimate friend, although she had probably not confided in him at all ; but their mutual youth sought to conspire against all that was a hindrance and hard to bear. In his love for her he grew impatient, longing to set her free ; the thought that he could not do it made the air of the room seem quite oppressive. It distressed him greatly, this incomprehensible connection.

The impressions he received from this visit disturbed him in his studies for his examination, which, until that day, had been very regular.

He formed the wildest of plans, even wrote over to his cousins in America, and asked if they could receive a young lady to live with them. He confided in Rendalen, who at first protested angrily ; but at last Kallem convinced him. Her feeling of individual responsibility ought to be aroused, she ought to be shown the dangers of continuing her present life ; above all she ought to be sent away, far away, where she would have freedom of thought and liberty to develop. . . . Kallem gained more and more assurance, and his

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love grew stronger from all this self-imposed solitude. Each time he met her, however short were the meetings, even though he only bowed to her on the street or in the corridor, strengthened him in the conviction that she was his, and his only, and must be set free!

This was before he had said a word to her about it.

Often before had he been in love, and often had pretended without its being the real thing; but now he had a longing to save, and then reform, all that was so pure yet so undeveloped, so talented and yet so forlorn, it lay in his disposition, this desire, and he gave himself up to it with all his soul. She, for her part, lost somewhat of her shyness each time they met; it seemed as though he really were a comfort to her after her sister left; indeed, unless he were much mistaken, he was even more than that. At all events, there was one unmistakable sign; he had told her that he stayed at home in the evenings on purpose to hear her play, and that he left his door ajar the better to hear; now she played every evening and often for a long time.

When he met her out with the children, and took them to the confectioner's, he had the greatest desire to speak out; but her manner prevented it. It was her trustful innocence that was the principal hindrance, and he dared not startle her. All the energy in him drove him to action; but his love for her lent itself to her wish for a poetical pastime where love might not be mentioned, although everything was symbolical of it. There

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was a charm about their intercourse the like of which he had never experienced.

On a certain evening, once every week, she took part in a private concert, or something of the kind, at the house of some of her husband's relations, the same house, in fact, where she had gone to that dance. Kallem made his way in to these evenings, through his fellow-student, her nephew. Of course he went there solely and entirely so as to be able to walk home with her at night. At this time the snow was gone and the streets were full of ice. When he told her that he was going to be there, too, and would be allowed to see her home (at which she was very pleased), it was an understood thing that he always had either a sledge or carriage for her.

They were about to start for home after a long evening when there had been a great deal too much music for those small rooms ; she hastened to get on her wraps and get away. Here he took her arm. "It is fortunate," said he, "that the moon is just up." She thought they would have got into one of the sledges that stood waiting there, or into a carriage that just then drove up ; she gave a little scream, as it was quite smooth ice just by the door, yet she went on bravely. Meanwhile they passed by one sledge after the other, and the carriage, too. None seemed to be theirs. "Are we not going to drive?" asked she. The rogue laughed ; it was he who had planned this walk. She tried to hide her disappointment ; but, after a few vain efforts, begged to be allowed to drive. Then he recollected how frightened she

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had been that first time ; his conscience pricked him, and he declared they would go to the very first stand, which was not far off. The road was not so very slippery, but it was steep ; she clung to his arm, staring nervously before her, with an occasional little scream. Matters did not mend as they advanced, for at times the whole road was covered with ice, though there were always one or two safe spots. He rather lost courage ; especially as he no longer heard her little screams. He had never seen any one so frightened before. As a matter of course, they made their way slowly step by step, with many and long pauses.

Some of the gardens and fields round about them were bare, and some were covered with snow and ice ; it was to these she tried to make her way ; but he showed her that the way was stopped, either by a house or a garden ; it was not like in the country. The fields looked broken up, the sky, too, for long, narrow cloudlets were floating through the dark blue atmosphere above, exactly like ice down below here with gaps between. The moon seemed to be racing after the cloudlets at full speed, trying to overtake them, pass through and hurry still farther on ; there must be a perfect hurricane up above ; down below all was quiet. Kallem's mistake made him feel both uneasy and unhappy. The unsteady light there was over the whole of nature, with its scattered colouring only increased this feeling ; surely something would go wrong. And never did that feeling come over him without its bringing back to his remembrance that night of terror

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from his childhood, with all its consequences. Was this to follow him all through life, this terrifying forewarning of his own wrong-doings? He was greatly excited; for she must not be allowed to fall. If it had not been for her timidity he would have gone down the hills in a merry, sliding dance; now her being frightened made him frightened too. Each slippery place became a real danger, from which he was only saved by passing on to a fresh one; they neither looked at each other nor did they utter a word, they were impatient and afraid. They were several minutes in doing what otherwise would have taken a few seconds; the one secretly blamed the other, struggling on as though for dear life. There was just occasional gasping, "Good Heavens!" or "Take care here! a despairing "No, no, it's no use!" and then a "Try again! Come along!"—at last not even that. She might groan and lament, almost cry, he no longer answered her. She was so taken up by her own fright that she never noticed the change.

But at last they saw salvation in front of them, namely, high houses on each side which had kept off the sun and prevented the snow melting. The question was now to get thus far; the stand was close by. At last they succeeded. She stopped and drew breath and tried to laugh, but without success. "Let us wait a little," she said, and drew a long breath again. They turned and looked on either side; farther away they heard sleigh bells and listened. "I hope the last horse has not left the stand," said she; "it is late."

She took his arm and they walked on. The road was not quite all right here either ; the snow was trodden down hard but there had been sand strewn on the pavement ; they walked quicker, and by degrees with greater assurance. " Thank God ! " said she, as much relieved as though she had come out of a sea of ice. Hardly had she said the words before down she fell. They had come to a deceptive place where there had been water, which was now frozen and covered with hoar frost. She slipped, and up against one of his feet, so that he too slipped and fell—the one on top of the other. He swore a tremendous oath in the fulness of his heart, and sprang to his feet again in order to help her ; but she lay there immovable with closed eyes.

He turned like ice. Was it concussion of the brain ? He laid her on his knee, pulled off his right-hand glove with his teeth, and then untied the strings under her chin. Her arms hung loosely down, her face was pale as death, he opened her cloak, he wanted to give her air. Then she moved. " Ragni ! " whispered he ; " Ragni ! " and bent down still nearer to her. " Dear, darling Ragni ! Forgive me ! " She opened her eyes. " Do you hear ? Can you forgive me ? " The colour came back to her cheeks, her hand went up to her cloak, which was unfastened ; then she must have felt it, she had only been dazed with fright. He could no longer control his joy, he pressed her head to him and kissed her one, two, three times. " Oh, how I love you ! " whispered he, and kissed her again. He

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felt she wanted to move, so he got up at once and helped her up as well. But she was not able to stand alone, and nearly fell, so he supported her to the garden railing just in front of the house; she caught hold of it and leaned against it as if she could not bear her own weight. He let go his hold of her to see if she could stand without help, which she was able to do. "I'll run for a sledge," said he, and away he went. As he ran along he bethought himself that he might have done that at once and all would have been avoided. But would he be able to get a sledge? If not there, he would run on farther. If only she could stand and nobody go by. . . . He ran and he flew, and when he saw a horse and sledge standing there, he jumped in, and would have had the coachman drive off at the top of his speed without knowing where he was to go to. When that was rectified and the sledge had started, he realised what he had said and done as he held her in his arms! He had felt it all along, though it had only been as it were in soft and gentle tones, now it burst out into full, rich melody.

"Drive on, faster! She is standing over there to the right. We fell down, and she hurt herself. There she is!" He jumped out and hurried up to her, while the coachman turned and drove the sledge close up to them. She was still leaning against the railing, half sideways; she had fastened her cloak again and drawn down her veil. She gave him her hand when he came, that she might have support; he took it, put his other

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hand on her waist so as to guide her in front of him ; he did not wish to risk being upset again. There was no further accident, he put her in the sledge, wrapped her up carefully, paid the coachman and told him where to go. She begged him not to drive with her ; she never said good-bye ; never looked up. They drove off.

At once he felt—now she was leaving him. Nothing annoys a sensible man more than his own stupidity and want of control. He wandered about the streets that night by the hour, and sneaked home like a beaten hound. He dared not inquire of the servant next morning, but in the evening she told him, unasked, that her mistress had not been well ; she had been sick and was still in bed, but was rather better. Marie's conscious smile put him into a towering passion. And she had the impudence, too, to examine his face closely. All the same, he was obliged to go and inquire the next day ; her mistress was up and quite well again. But neither that day nor the next did he get a glimpse of her, or hear a sound from any of the children. Neither did she play in the evening, he made an excuse to stay at home and listen. Neither she nor the children passed that way when they were going out ; they went down the back-stairs. He never met her. She chose new ways and roads.

Until then his love had been a secret happiness full of many plans. But now he had used violence and broken into the sanctuary, and his bright days and healthy nights gave way to ceaseless dreaming and useless ponderings. He

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went through all that happened, and each time with self-torturing pangs. He despised himself, allowed himself to be led into all sorts of dissipation and then despised himself all the more. From the moment he had touched her lips and had offended her ears there was, as it were, a veil drawn across her image; he no longer saw the pure, dove light whiteness, borne in all its charms and helplessness by music; he only saw one he longed for. But his was a healthy nature, and he had a strong sense of the comic side of things; he would not let himself be eaten up by this self-torture and stupid longing; he would move away immediately and would do it under pretence that he was going to travel. In that way he thought to overcome all difficulties as he would leap over a fence of split sticks. He could not bear her having closed her door to him; he could not even bear the servant's impertinent smile.

He was struck now by so much in this moving of his which was like the time when Rendafen had moved. He had not borne it one single day, either! Surely it could never have been for the same reason? He laughed aloud; of course it must be exactly the same thing that had happened to him!

Rendalen's mother had been in town and had lived there; at that time Ragui had been with them a great deal; Rendalen and she had played duets together. They kept this up after his mother had left, and it was always on his piano; he knew that for certain. . . . This seemed to him a most humiliating coincidence.

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Kallem knew no higher or nobler nature than Rendalen's; he would never have allowed himself any liberties. But that she could succeed in so completely disturbing his peace of mind that he had been obliged to move? There must be something strange in her thus to unsettle them. He excused himself in this way, but what was worse was that he felt an ever-increasing temptation. The same evening he said to Marie that he was going to leave either the next day or the day after, he was not sure which it would be; but she was to ask for his bill—as a matter of course, he would pay for the whole quarter. The girl looked at him, she guessed the hidden meaning at once; did she enjoy it or had she something to tell? In her usual modest way, she asked if he wanted his bill at once? No, he did not.

He did not leave the day following, but put it off till the next day. He meant to go away for a few days, but would first take lodgings somewhere and move all his possessions. He went out in the afternoon and found rooms, but quite in another part of the town. Then he speculated a little as to what reasons he should give for his moving—particularly to Rendalen; he came to the conclusion that he would tell him the whole truth; to others he would merely say that he had been disturbed in various ways at his old lodgings, which was the truth. He went home again about five o'clock, and in through the bed-room door, put on his dressing-gown and slippers, went into the next room and lay down on the sofa, where he fell fast asleep—he needed the rest. At seven

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o'clock the servant came in and lit the stove without his noticing it. He woke up a little later and heard the fire crackling and saw the light; he understood from that, that it must be past seven o'clock. His thoughts flew at once to her who was so near in those other rooms. He had a secret hope that, when she knew he was going away, he would be allowed to hear her play once more. So far he had been disappointed in this; but he could not give up his belief that his departure would trouble her. He lay on the sofa listening. Could he go and say good-bye to her just as if nothing had happened? Should he light his lamp? Should he go out again? He raised himself up and stared at the fire in the stove. Then he heard a door in the passage open, and voices—a couple of women's voices, with a strong north-country accent; from that he concluded that some newly arrived relations had been calling and were being escorted to the door; he heard the aunt's slow, drawling voice; he heard, too, a man's voice—was it Ole Tuft? But he could not hear her voice, the voice he was listening for. There were good-byes all round and the door was shut; then came the aunt's voice again, then Ole Tuft's, it really was his voice—he had evidently arrived just as the others were leaving; they went into the aunt's room and shut the door after them, at the same time a door was shut a little further away. Again there was a ring; again a door opened and out came—both the children, shouting with joy; they had seized the occasion to try and run into Kallem, but they

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were not allowed, so there was a chase after them down the corridor amid much laughter; they were captured and a door shut upon them; at the same moment, the entrance door was opened; one of those north-country ladies had forgotten her galoshes, and now he could hear Ragni's voice offering to fetch a light, as it was quite dark; but the offer was refused in the usual sing-song style. Her galoshes were close by the door; but she could not get them on easily, they were so new! At last! Now they were on! Again was heard "Good-bye, good-bye!" and then the answer, "Very welcome on Friday?" This last was Ragni's voice. Did he deceive himself—or was it not just like the voice of one who feels danger is near? It did not sound like her voice. Did she speak of him perhaps against her will? Up he jumped, and was at the door before she had shut the outer one. Should he? He listened for some sign. He did not hear her go; perhaps she was still standing outside. His heart beat fast and loud, but his hand felt softly for the door-handle—he opened it noiselessly. To him who had been staring at the fire in his stove, the passage seemed pitch-dark. He put out his hands to feel for the door and got hold of the latch; he groped his way still further, but no one was there. Could she have gone out with the last visitor? But no, he heard her say good-bye and remind the others about Friday. How was it he had not heard her go? He never heard the inner door open again. She must be in the passage.

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His heart beat so that he could almost hear it ; but he was impelled onward. Then his hand touched some clothes ; he turned to ice ! but he came to his senses directly, for the garments were cold and empty. Some one was heard coughing and spitting in one of the rooms, it was Kate ; then the children were heard talking in the kitchen or dining-room. He stood still, like any criminal, when he heard these accustomed every-day sounds. He ought never to have embarked on this proceeding. He heard the aunt's droning questions and Ole's clear answers ; that is to say, he heard their voices, but not what they said. Was Ragni in the passage ? She might have been looking for something and have stopped in her fright at seeing him. If he went on, he might startle her so that she might rush up to any door and open it. There he would be then visible to all !

Still, she was too timid for that. He advanced a few steps. He was in slippers, so his steps were hardly audible ; but he hoped that she was not there. The children were talking in the room at the end of the passage ; he could hear them so distinctly now the nearer he came ; he seemed to see them kneeling each on her chair and building houses at the table. He was ashamed of himself ; what business had he there ? But though he asked himself that question, he went on all the same ; he went from one side to the other, touching first a cloak, then a shawl, then the panel of a door, then one of the coloured passage windows, which he could just distinguish. A carriage

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rattled past ; soon after there came a sound of sleigh-bells dying away in the distance ; in this kind of half-thaw both carriages and sledges were used ! Something fell down in the kitchen ; Kate began to cough again ; how long time must seem to him ! probably he never used lights ? Surely the door between the children's room and the kitchen was open, for they ran in there to find out what had fallen down ; he heard the north-country servant answer with lazy good-nature ; it was a wooden dish that fell, it tumbled out of the rack. Still he went on. If Ragni were there she must be in the extreme corner. How frightened she must be by this time ! What must she think of him ? Were he to turn back now, he would look like an unsuccessful thief. It was a little lighter by the window, but no further ; no light came either from under or over the doors, not even through the keyholes, or from the children's room. Could she be standing there ? He fancied he must see her were she there.

Perhaps she had gone from the passage in to see her aunt ? Close by his own door ? Or she might have left the door of Kate's or the children's room open when she went out, and have shut it again just as he opened his. Could she be sitting there dreaming ? He felt sure of it ; but that was because he wished it to be so. But still he went forward. At last close up to the door he could hear the children in their room and the servant bustling about in the kitchen to the left. He turned round and felt much relieved. He walked

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back much faster, keeping his hands in front of him ; suddenly he took hold of a warm, firm arm. He shivered and trembled, sparks seemed to flash from his eyes ; he stopped abruptly. But the arm scarcely moved, so he regained courage. He let his arm glide slowly down from the arm and round the waist ; which he cautiously encircled. It felt soft and pliable ; she stood quite still but trembled a little. He gave a faint pressure. With his other hand he took hold of her hand and gently pressed it ; it trembled too. He pressed it again—and step by step they moved slowly forward—without resistance, but still not quite willingly. He could just hear his own footsteps, but hers not at all ; the children were talking quietly now. There was not a sound to be heard either in Kule's, or in the aunt's room ; but in front of them was an open chink at his door. They arrived there ; he pushed it open gently and would have led her in ; but here she stopped and tried to draw away her hand. He heard her breathing and felt her breath, could just make out the pale face as he gently pushed her to the threshold, then over it, and closed the door behind them. Here he let go his hold of her so as to shut the door as quietly as possible. She stood with her back to him just as he left her ; but with her face buried in her hands ; when he came up to her she began to cry. He put his arm round her to draw her closer to him ; and her crying turned to sobbing. She sobbed so bitterly and grievously that his blood was sobered and a fresh train of thought set in. Unresistingly she let

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him lead her to the sofa ; she sobbed so despairingly that he felt he must have a light, as one would if any one were taken ill. So he made haste to trim the lamp, remembered though that the blinds must first be pulled down, so he did that and then lit the lamp.

No one could weep like that who had not been for days and nights shut in with their grief. The very table she leaned on shook with her sobs.

Hundreds of times he had made fun of those lovers who in novels and plays go down upon their knees ; but now he pushed the end of the table a little to one side and let himself sink on his knees before her like the humblest sinner. He was trying to see her face, but with both hands she held her handkerchief up before it. Her head, shoulders, and bosom heaved with her violent weeping, he felt each movement, and begged and implored her to forgive him ! He had not been master of himself when he spoke those words to her that night on the ice. He loved her, they belonged to each other. "Oh, do not weep so !" he entreated, "I cannot bear it !" He took her hands in his and sat down on the sofa beside her, he laid her head on his shoulder and put his arms round her ; he kissed her hair, he pressed her tear-stained cheek against his own ; but she cried just as much in this position as in the former one. He wanted to give her some wine. No, no !—but it was really terrible this crying. Could it be because he had brought her in to his room ? He had been longing so to see her that he could not resist it when he heard her in the passage.

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Surely she would not have him leave without saying good-bye? Was he never to see her again? She shook her head, and disengaging herself from his grasp, laid her head down on the table and sobbed into her handkerchief, more piteously than ever. "Do you wish me to leave?" he asked; but she did not hear him. He allowed her to cry on; after some little time he bent down to her and said: "I will do all you wish me to do." Then she raised herself in all her tears from the table and threw herself in his arms. He folded both arms round her, and felt, as he held her in that close embrace, that she took it in a higher and nobler way than he did.

But some one was at the door and it was opened; it was the servant with his supper. In a great fright he took away his arms and stood up; but Ragni merely laid herself down on the table again and sobbed. Carefully the servant put down the tray on the vacant edge of the table, with equal care she moved the lamp a little and pushed the tray further in. She was red in the face and did not look at either of them; but she had the usual smile which seemed to say: I have been expecting this for long! And now Kallem fancied there was a quite roguish delight in that smile, so very differently can one look at one and the same thing. She came in very quietly and went out equally so, and shut the door as gently as though he himself had done it.

"Good God! Ragni!" he exclaimed. She answered not a word, it seemed to her a trifling matter, engrossed as she was in her own grief.

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Again he took her and drew her close to him, then she said: "Oh, how unhappy I am!"—and that was really the only thing she said all the time she sat there. He could answer nothing but what would have sounded very stupid. He tried to say something and took refuge in caresses; but she got up and drew herself away—she wished to leave him. He felt he was not able to keep her any longer, but took her to the door. Before she opened it, she turned to him with a look of sorrowing devotion, like one in death-agony. He put out the lamp and she slipped out.

But just as she shut the door behind her, a faint ray of light fell on her, it came from the little recess that led into the aunt's room; at that very moment the door opened and her aunt stood before her—looking to Ragni's fevered imagination like a huge whale on two legs. Of course, the aunt had heard Ragni crying in her lodger's room, and had seen at a glance how to account for Ragni's strange manner the last few days. So she had kept guard outside her own door, and just as Ragni was leaving Kallem's room, she gave a push to her door, thereby causing the light to fall full on her. Her aunt put out her hand; that was as much as to say: "This way, my lady!" And Ragni obeyed, and her aunt let her pass in before her. She was not alone. There stood a sofa against the wall nearest to the room she had just quitted; a tall, fair man with a mild and gentle face rose up from the sofa-corner; it was Ole Tuft. It was he who had first heard her cry and had been outside

their door. Ragni sank down on to a chair between the sofa and the door.

The next day she was in bed. But before Kallem went out he got a note from her in which she told him that her aunt had heard her crying in his room, and so had Tuft; he had also been at their door. There was nothing more in the note; but low down at the bottom of the page the almost illegible words: "Never more."

In the midst of all the fright which now came over him too, Kallem thought those poor little words "never more" so eloquent, that they caused his eyes to fill with tears, but his heart to take fresh courage. Something must be done now! Her aunt and Ole Tuft had evidently been cross-questioning her. He had heard nothing of it, so it must either have been done very quietly or else not in that room at all. Poor, poor Ragni!

He was full of the greatest compassion, of furious indignation, of fear, revenge, boundless love, disappointment, rage!

He dressed himself and hurried out into the street. Where to? He would go to Ole Tuft; the confounded croaker meddling in his affairs! He was both spy and detective! What the devil did he want? What was his object? Was that walking in "the ways of God," that too? Peeping through key holes and listening at doors? It was all in "the ways of God" that this fellow had stolen his handsome sister from him; was he now to rob him of his love? Why had

he not gone direct to him? Why first tell the aunt?

He felt the greatest desire to go and maltreat him, to nearly half kill him. By Heavens, he deserved it! He turned round really intending to go there; but then he seemed to see his sister's great eyes gazing steadfastly at him. It was no fancy; turn about as he would, on every side he was met by those clear eyes. He seemed even to feel her cheek resting against his like that last evening they were together. The end of it was that he walked past. But that brought him in the neighbourhood of his old lodgings, and he thought of Rendalen. He would go to him! He would not keep one item of the truth from him; it would be such happiness to unburden oneself. At a little distance from the door he saw someone coming out. Was it—? Ole Tuft! The scoundrel himself! . . . Kallem's blood boiled; but Tuft went the other way and never saw his brother-in-law.

Kallem did not know Tuft at all as he was now. Had he done so, he would have understood that for him it was a question of saving two souls from perdition. He lived in a state of feverish sleeplessness for the sake of these two precious souls, and sought help; and allowed himself no peace or rest till he had accomplished his aim. He might have gone himself to Kallem, but it might have been dangerous, and certainly was useless. Other steps must be taken in this matter. If Kallem had had any inkling of this, instead of going to Rendalen, he would have

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followed Tuft home and have beaten him till he could not stand.

Fortunately, however, he suspected nothing and rang at Rendalen's door, full of all he was going to tell him. Rendalen opened the door himself at once; he was almost ready dressed to go out; he stood there with his hat on and his overcoat in his hand, well brushed and carefully got up. As soon as he saw Kallem, he lifted his head like a war-horse confronting the enemy. "You here?" he exclaimed. Kallem walked in quickly, highly astonished. Rendalen shut the door, locked it as well, and flung his hat and coat from him. "I was just getting ready to go to you!" he hissed out the words; he was quite pale through all his freckles, his thin lips tightly pressed together, his small grey eyes flashing. And now he clenched his broad, short hands, the hands of a giant, till they got quite white. His red hair stood on end and seemed to rival the eyes in flashing fire; the enormous bodily strength of the man made Kallem uneasy and alarmed. "What the devil is the matter?" The other answered in the greatest rage, though subdued: "Tuft has been here and told me everything. Ah, I see you turn pale." He came still closer to him: "She was the most innocent creature on earth—you villain!" His voice trembled.

"Oh, come now!" said Kallem, but he turned cold as ice. But the other had no longer any control over himself and interrupted: "You think I know nothing about such things? Why, it is

common to every single individual ! And do you know why ! moved away from there ? Do you imagine that I have less power and influence over any one than you ? You damned, cowardly villain !” He poured forth these words like wild shrieks out of his troubled spirit, and yet he spoke more quietly than he had previously done. Anger and scorn in such a degree is always infectious.

“Oh, don't you be jealous, man !” shouted Kallem. If a bucket full of blood had been poured over Rendalen, he could not have turned redder, and as suddenly turned white again. In vain he strove to speak, but not being able, he went straight at Kallem, piercing him with his eyes, so that they almost burnt him. He just managed to say : “I have the—the—the greatest wish to fight you !”

“Come on !” said Kallem, and put himself into position. Hardly had he thus mockingly challenged him, before Rendalen's right hand swung round in the air. Kallem stooped down and then rose unhurt, but kept on provoking him. Rendalen rushed at him again. Kallem nimbly jumped on one side. “Are you out of your senses ?” shouted he, loudly.

Rendalen stood there just as if some one had seized him from behind and were holding him, and by degrees he seemed to lose all power. He stared in front of him, stiff and pale, until at last, summoning all his strength of will to his aid, he succeeded in turning away and walked slowly to the window, placed himself in front of it, and stared vacantly out in the air. His breathing

was so rapid that Kallem thought he would have had a fit. Kallem himself stood quite motionless; he was too angry to go near him. To him Rendalen was a mystery; a moment ago a prey to the most violent passion, and now half paralysed. Nothing was heard but the sound of his breathing; his face was unhappy—so utterly, miserably unhappy! What in the world was the meaning of it all? He looked at his companion, till all his old kindly feeling for him woke up again; and without further ado he went up to the window too and stood beside him. "You must not take it so much to heart," he said; "it is not so bad as you perhaps think." The other did not answer; perhaps he never heard it, he kept on looking out of the window as before. Or, perhaps he did not believe him, and thought he was scoffing. Then Kallem smiled, and his smile was unmistakable, it was good and genuine. Life and colour seemed to come into Rendalen's face again; he turned his head. In joyful haste Kallem said: "Upon my soul, I have done her no harm, old fellow." Rendalen did not at once take in what he said: he could not turn it about in his mind so quickly; but when Kallem put his head closer to him and said: "Upon my honour I have not!" then Rendalen's heart rejoiced and he put his arms round him.

Overcome as they both were, there followed an exchange of confidences which was boundless. Rendalen heard how it had all come about, and how it was they came to love each other. It made a great impression on Rendalen, which he

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neither could nor would try to conceal. So Kallem asked him openly whether he too loved her? Again Rendalen turned pale and ill at ease, and Kallem felt unhappy at his own thoughtlessness; but it could not be rectified. The conversation came to a dead stop, and Rendalen's eyes avoided his. When, at last, he succeeded in shaping his answer, he said: "I am not at liberty to love any one. That is why I moved."

Kallem felt this to the very marrow of his bones. Rendalen sat with his arms on the table, and a book in his hands which he kept turning over and looking at both outside and in. "There is madness in our family—widely spread. My father was mad. I—well, you know how ungovernable I am—I am on the borders of it. My father was exactly the same. So that when you said that there—about being out of my senses, you hit the mark. The very words of my mother. I dare not give in. Not in love either. All the same I could not always resist. However, I have no wish to confess. Music helps me to forget; but here it betrayed me, and has done so before, too." He put the book from him, took another one, and laid it on the first one, spinning them round on the table. Then he heard Kallem say, half laughingly: "And so you chose me for your substitute?"

"What the deuce could I do? I thought you were an honourable man."

In the evening Kallem struggled to write a letter to the apothecary, he wanted him to help

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them. The more he wrote, the more impossible he found it to explain to the old bachelor and grumpy naturalist, what love was, and in what sore distress was she for whom he now wrote to ask for help; he tore up his letter. Quickly he determined to try his father. The latter had done all he could to help Ole Tuft; perhaps he now would help some one else? His father was very peculiar, but he was a warm-hearted man and hated injustice. Edward Kallem had never heard of anything more unjust than Ragni's self-imposed lot; he was almost certain that his father would feel the same. So he told him about their love—quite without reserve; he promised that if his father would help her, this treaty should be like a consecration. He would apply himself more earnestly than ever to his studies; he would strive to obtain the highest of everything. And though it might be long before they could marry, both on account of his as well as her further education—he would wait for her as faithfully as she for him; that was his solemn promise. And he hoped his father had no reason to think he would break that promise; but rather take him at his word and help her.

He was not mistaken in this. Three days afterward he had an answer by telegram, that everything was arranged according to his wish; the necessary should be sent by the first post. With this victorious telegram in hand, he began to work his and Rendalen's mutual plan; to have her sent over to Kallem's cousin at Madison. He

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wrote to him at once and asked him to cable "yes" or "no."

He obtained a first meeting with her through the servant, who showed herself to be thoroughly faithful to Ragni; it was in a street outside the town and did not last long; the servant was with her. He told her at once what were his plans and how it could be arranged, and who was to have a hand in the matter. She was so frightened that he thought it would be impossible to proceed; on no consideration would she leave the children. He was in despair after this meeting, and went to Rendalen to complain. He at once suggested that the children could be sent to his mother; he would write to her about it. When Kallem, at their next "rendezvous," told her this, Ragni seemed to hesitate; she acknowledged humbly that she could never educate them so well herself. But what she partially agreed to the one day, she drew back from the next; every time she had been with the children it again all seemed so impossible to her. And as she each time worked herself up to such a pitch of excitement that all the passers-by stared at them, they could no longer keep their appointments in the street. There could be no question of their meeting anywhere but at his or Rendalen's rooms; but Ragni had again become so shy that he doubted whether she would consent. He prepared her for it by letters, and got Marie also to try and persuade her to it, and to accompany her, at last this succeeded too. After this they met a few times at his rooms, once too at Rendalen's; but always there was the same un-

decided wavering and hesitation as to what she would do, and always there was great despair. She was afraid, too, of the actual journey ; fancy going all the way to America, alone ! And alone from New York to Madison ; that was the worst of all ! It was impossible, quite impossible ! Marie would like to go with her ; Kallem promised her a ticket ; but on no account could they both forsake the children ; no, it was most wrong even to think of such a thing. Then Marie would wait until the children were properly provided for.

If she really were to start, she would have to go on board without any one knowing anything of it ; therefore the necessary things for the voyage would have to be bought ; but as a matter of course, all would have to be most carefully arranged. He expected to meet with opposition in this ; but she was still such a child, that before it was really settled about the voyage, he had persuaded her to buy all her travelling outfit ; it amused her immensely. If only he could manage to have a good long talk with her, or see her every day just for a little—but she was cautious to an extreme. Then he wrote letters yards long ; she dare not answer, she fancied she was watched by her aunt and the north-country kitchen-maid ; but as the letters told her of all the strength of his love, and as they, with all the cunning of love, were written to charm her imagination, they effected a great deal more than the meetings had done. It was thanks to the cunning Marie that these letters reached their destination ; she was too clever both for the aunt and for the north-

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country girl. As long as these arrangements were going on and keeping his strength up to the mark, Kallem lived for nothing else. Perseverance increases our courage; and when at last the cable came with "yes," he ventured to form a bold plan. It consisted in getting everything ready by the time the next big English steamer was to start, and not to say a word to her about it, but to make sure that she that day should have an excuse for going out early and remaining out a long time, and also arrange for Marie to be at liberty. He made an appointment for Ragni to meet him at his rooms two hours before the steamer was to sail; both ticket and luggage were all ready.

On the appointed day and at the given hour, she and Marie appeared. Ragni's luggage had been sent on board early in the morning and the carriage ordered and paid for. Nothing was to be seen in the rooms that called to mind a departure; but the way he received her made her afraid that something was brewing. Formerly he had been so self-contained—partly, too, because Marie was always present—now he embraced Ragni with all the tenderness he was capable of, and seemed as though he could not let her go. His grief had no regard for others; neither did he seek to hide anything, but, with both her hands in his, and gazing into her eyes, he told her hurriedly that her luggage had been sent on board; the steamer would sail in two hours; and here was the ticket.

She understood directly that this was the

choice between him and everything else—there was no time to reflect. And that was how he gained the day. At first she stood there in speechless helplessness ; then she crept close up to him and stayed there. He kissed her “ welcome ; ” they held each other in a close embrace and wept. The servant saw some one coming outside the windows and drew down the blinds, so there was only a dim light in the room ; and they, too, heard Marie crying in the next room. Their embrace gradually became a whispered conversation, at first interrupted, but then accompanied by subdued sobbing, which was checked and began again, like music with sourdine. There were whispers of the day when he would journey after her, never again to part from her ; and whispers of how true a friend he would be to her ; that their future was worthy of sacrifice now ; that both his and her letters should be like diaries—short, hurried words of endless love, all from him ; hers was the weeping, sourdine-like.

Although this was the hour of departure, this hour they spent together now, it was the first time that they had so completely and undisturbedly shown their devotion for each other. The novelty of it shone in upon their grief till there seemed to be a sunny haze around them. Soon her hushed sobbing became a whisper ; the first time she spoke he wanted to look at her, but she would not allow it. If he would sit quite still and not look at her, then she would tell him something. He was the white pasha ! She

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would not tell him what she meant by it, it would take too long ; but she had been waiting for the white pasha from the time she was a child ; that is to say, since her father died ; she was then twelve years old. She had suffered much, most of all when she came home from Berlin and had not sufficient courage to play in public ; but neither would she tell him about that ; it would take too long. Always she had dreamt of this white pasha ; ah, if he would but come ! She was quite confident that he would come. Even when she went down to the "whales," she knew he would follow her ; he would find the way. Once she had thought that Rendalen was the white pasha ; but, as it turned out, he was not ; he had moved away to make room for the real one to come. The first evening they two had met in the silent falling snow. Why should they have met there ? She had looked at him then and thought, wonderingly : Is he the white pasha ? The next time they met he had carried little Juanita, and then she felt almost certain that none other would have thought of that. But then everything seemed to have come so rapidly, and it was all so different from what she had imagined. He asked in a whisper if she would tell him what had made her go down to the "whales" a year ago ; she shuddered when he asked her. And even after her marriage, did she still expect the white pasha to come ? More eagerly than ever. Had she not known then what marriage was ? She pressed closer to him and was silent.

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Although he was just on the verge of learning what he most wished to know, he stopped.

He told her that it was arranged so that Rendalen was to meet Ragni on board; the former was going home for a few days and would take care of her. Then they got up.

Would Kallem not take her to the steamer? He put his arms round her, hid his face on her shoulder and said, he dare not. This was the hardest blow of all. For a while she was quite overcome; then they sat down again and took leave of each other, a long, harrowing farewell. Marie was on thorns. He would have taken her down to the carriage; but Marie forbade it most decidedly; they must not be seen together by any one.

He heard the carriage drive away, but did not see it, and in all the succeeding years he looked back upon that moment as the most terrible he had ever experienced.

He did not go out to see the steamer sail away in the distance; but in the afternoon he went down to the place where she had lain.

From there he went for a long walk—and timed it so that her aunt should see him. It was part of his plan.

For a time this kept all suspicions away from him. No one could suppose that the person who had arranged Ragni's flight and who was the cause of it, would come to the front so soon.

Every one who remembers this event, will remember, too, how severely she was condemned. A stranger, shy, and without relations, she had

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left no remembrance of herself—unless it were of her poetical playing so full of song; and that could not plead for her now. A year ago she had undertaken to live for her dead sister's children; and now she had forsaken them. The blind man whom she had married was her own choice; she had had no difficulties with him.

If she regretted it, why not say so openly? Why behave in that sly, underhand way?

It was hard for Kallem to listen to all this; had he ruined her reputation? Already every one took it for granted that she had had a "liaison" with some one; and the hour was not far distant when it would be asserted that *he* was the guilty one.

He met the children with Marie outside the university one day, and they both rushed straight at him. What would he not have given had it been Ragni who came smiling after them? Of course he took the children into a confectioner's and heard them tell how "mamma had gone away in a large ship," "mamma was coming back for Christmas with new dresses and new dolls."

There was an illustrated paper lying on the table; Juanita took it into her head that all the ladies in the pictures were "mamma;" when her sister said no, she just moved her little finger on to another, "that's mamma!"

That same day Kallem had been present at an unsuccessful operation; a mishap occurred and the patient nearly bled to death. His nerves were so upset at this time that it made a great impression on him. But when he left the children and went to his dinner, it seemed to him as

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though he were the unsuccessful operator. He had wished to set Ragni free, but he had done it badly, and now her good name was bleeding to death. Social life altogether was a network of muscles, sinews, and veins. . . .

He was sitting in the university library a few days later, reading and studying some plates in front of him, when he looked up to see Ole Tuft, fresh and smiling, before him. He did not know where Kallem was living now, and so had gone to find him here. Kallem got up and went out with him.

None of Kallem's fierce courage remained to threaten his brother-in-law ; he no longer desired to half kill him, not even to look reproachfully at him ; and he would be more than satisfied if Ole did not cast reproachful glances at him. Probably Ole knew, as all must know who were in any way connected with the event, that Edward Kallem was a sinner. He must have heard it from Josephine, who would hear it from her father—or, was he mistaken ? Was there not a mixture of doubt in Ole's friendliness ? A suspicion as to his thorough honourableness ? A warning that such a beginning could never lead to victory ? Or, was all this hearty friendliness sincere, genuine "brotherly love"—fostered by a young theologian's obedience to the command : "Love one another ?"

Ole came to announce that he had finished his studies and was going home ; his joy was great. He asked if he should take any message ; he said he hoped soon to begin his "work ;" he hinted

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at what then would happen ; the way was clear before him and the goal was not a small one. All who passed in and out of the library stopped to look at the good-looking young fellow.

••Edward stood bare-headed up on the library steps, as Ole Tuft, in his heavy sort of way, went slouching across the square. This much was true : there went a man who was sure in himself ; his beginning was thorough and complete, as was his nature.

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I

" ——— JUSTIFICATION has its origin in the mercy of God. It cannot have it in the sinner or his moral struggles with self ; for he is unjust. And as such he neither deserves it nor can he lay claim to it. God's sublime will alone can justify him."

The clergyman walked backwards and forwards, learning by heart from the written sheets he held in his hand. The sun was shining brightly in at both windows ; they looked to the south-west and were wide open ; a milky whiteness seemed to come through the furthest window and shed itself over the grey varnished floor ; fluttering aspen-leaves were reflected on the window ; the aspen-trees stood trembling by the railing outside on the road. The scent of auriculas, lilacs, and laburnums streamed in from the garden ; he recognised each particular scent, floating through the air ; for he had planted both trees and flowers himself ; they were his pets. If the breeze were a little stronger, regardless of everything, it would waft through the whole garden a powerful whiff from

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the budding birches and fresh pine-needles on the fir-trees which stood outside his domain ; each time followed by a whiff of all sorts of things from the open fields ; there was a smell of growing.

Hush !

“—— ———What makes God so merciful to the poor unjust man, who can do nothing by himself ? It is His unfathomable love for sinners, His unmerited loving-kindness, that makes him so.”

The steamer whistled for the third time ; no, this was irresistible, he must watch the steamer as it steamed away from the pier in a long curve, and out across the lake, cutting the mirror-like water in two ; the larger share fell to the islands yonder, the lesser to the shore here by the town. He took up his telescope from his desk. The pier down below was full of many-coloured parasols, with a mixture of men's hats, mostly dark in colour, and here and there were linen hoods and kerchiefs, oftenest several of them together.

He heard steps to the right in the sand ; they came from his mother's garden and were coming to this one—steps of a grown-up person and two small child's steps to one of the other's. “I say, mother, what has the steamer got inside its stomach ?” “Ha, ha !” Then there came a woman who gave one the impression of great power and strength. A powerful throat and full chest, exceptionally well made ; a dark-looking face, rather large and with a hooked nose ; the hair was almost black. She had on a cream-coloured muslin dress spotted with bright-red flowers ; it was made with a red silk yoke and a

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belt of the same stuff and colour. It was a striking contrast to her dark complexion, black hair, and clear eyes; she showed her appreciation of the warm spring day by her consummate brilliancy of colouring. But directly she saw the smiling Melancthon face in the window, she let down her red parasol between them. She led her little boy by the hand, a pretty little fellow about four years old, with fair hair and a face like the face of him standing in the window. The boy dropped his mother's hand, opened the gate between the two gardens, and ran past to open the next gate out to the road. As his wife passed by, the clergyman whispered: "I congratulate you! You are charming!" But there was a bitter sweetness in the tone. Ought a clergyman's wife to dress as she did?

Without lowering her parasol, she walked on to the open gate and along the road down toward the town; the little boy hastened to shut the gate and ran after her. Where are you going?—Down to see!" shouted the boy as he ran on. The back of her neck seen under her hat, her figure against the sunlight, her walk, the bright colours . . . the clergyman stood in the window drumming on the sill and whistling noiselessly. His glistening eyes continued to follow her—till he got up, giving a powerful push to the sill with all five fingers.

"—— God does not punish, He is long-suffering, He wishes to save. But not as the leader of an army gives quarter, or a king grants an amnesty (perhaps they won't all understand

'amnesty;' should 'I say—oblivion? . . . No, that's not enough; 'merciful oblivion;' well then—); but not as the leader of an army gives quarter or a king grants merciful oblivion; not like that does God judge; no, that would be contrary to God's eternal holiness. Justification is certainly an act of mercy, but it is also an act of judgment. It needs a fundamental law, that is, the claims of the law, which is God's own, must be fulfilled."

Now this was decidedly very juridical.

He looked down into the book which lay open on the desk between the two windows; he compared it with the one he held in his hand. All the while he listened to the roar of the steamer which came cutting in across the lake. He felt obliged to look out of the furthest window, and the result was that unconsciously he sat himself down there. The sun was shining off the steamer's white awning, a line of foam stretched between shore and island like a rope; not the tiniest cloud was in the sky, so that the smoke rose up against a clear background and the noise of the steamer was heard distinctly. The clergyman looked from the steamer to the town, to the shore, across the lake, and towards the hills away on the other side of the lake; the snow still lay on most of the distant blue hills. The noise of the steamer seemed to fill everything, like another sermon following upon his own. The modest • fragrance coming from his own little garden attracted his eyes from the greater to the less. Little Edward and he had done it all together,

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that is to say, he had really done it, and little Edward had been there to make mischief. The minister examined first the beds on which as yet nothing had come up, then he looked at those that had been first finished, they already wanted weeding. Little Edward could very well help with that. Tiresome, very; but he had promised himself that nobody but he should touch the garden this year; bending is a healthy thing, it causes the gall to mix freely with the blood. His thoughts turned unconsciously to his wife; when would she come to him with a glass of wine and a bit of cake? It is in the nature of women to guess our weaknesses and to be lenient to them. He looked up, she had disappeared; he then stood bolt upright:

“——The claims of the law, which are God's own, must be fulfilled. If a sinner could do this by himself, then there would be no mercy in justification; consequently it must be by the help of another.

“But even this atonement by another must come of God's saving mercy, if it is not to do away with justification (oh, how juridical!). If this work of mercy is to be a benefit to all, then the atonement must be extended to the whole of sinful humanity. If only the Almighty Himself can bring about a like atonement, a like reconciliation and justification.

“It is a basis of faith for all Christians, that this doctrine of the salvation of the world, and the forgiveness of sins of the whole of humanity, once for all, are obtained through Jesus Christ, and that

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each individual sinner can reap the benefit thereof." He looked up. Surely the steamer should be . . . yes, there it is. He went to the window and remained standing there. The ship shot out in a straight line towards the headland, which stretched so far that it almost reached to the island. The large town which lay to the right, and of which the headland formed the nose, stretched itself out almost the whole way across; the sea lay between. Farm upon farm lay in the sun, verdant and fruitful; here and there were large gaps that showed the distance between the farms. But that side which stretched out toward the island appeared to be nothing but a flat tongue of land; the steamer had to go through the narrow strait out yonder and disappear in the large bay beyond.

What a puffing and groaning! Just as if nature had learnt to speak! That is to say, the entire surroundings, not only a part of them. Supposing a string were strung across the whole country and a bow were to be drawn over it, it would be like the sound of the steamer's noise——

Hush!

"——God has so willed it, and has ordained it so, that a sinner can be justified by His grace, through Christ who has fulfilled the law for us. The merits of Christ and the righteousness of Christ have paid all our debts. Every one can in a way take a share for himself of the righteousness that Christ has gained for the world." No, stop a bit, is not that going rather far? Still that is about the meaning of it.

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Soon after this he lay stretched out at the window, leaning on his elbows, as if he had no intention of ever getting up again. As Josephine had not returned with the little one, he gazed down the road and over the sea and island, thinking of the islet that lay out there to the left; he could not see it from here; but he knew it was there, and that it was so amusing. His thoughts flew rapidly from the mountains to the steamer again; it was struggling forward towards the little strait. The island out yonder had a garden hat on, and now it seemed as if a veil were added as well from the smoke of the steamboat. Surely the wind was blowing from a different quarter out there? No, now it seems the same over here too. The wind chops and changes at this time of year. No scent from trees, gardens, or fields was wafted towards him now, we shall probably soon see the fan of the screw drawing black lines through the water. To the left, down by the sea, an engine whistle screamed shrilly; perchance a train was about to start, or perhaps they were only shunting a luggage train.

Good Heavens, how quiet everything was otherwise! He could hear children's voices from afar, even the very vibrations were audible. Hammering and sawing could be heard every now and then in the new house at the corner of the beach street and the road that turned up this way; the sound seemed to proceed from an empty space. The staccato puffs of the groaning steamer could still be faintly heard in the distance. The house he was in lay in a free and open space, it was

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therefore that he had so extensive a view and could hear everything so distinctly ; all this, however, would be over when once the fields were parcelled off for building purposes.

He fell into deep thought on this subject, would it not be wise for him to buy up land ? He wished to do so very much ; but house and ground and everything they had belonged to his wife. His own little fortune was invested in the tiny house and garden to the right, where his mother lived.

There are many advantages in having a rich wife, even though the marriage contract may leave her free to dispose of her fortune as she chooses ; many little comforts are gained which make life pleasanter and work easier ; besides it certainly increases one's authority—particularly a clergyman's. Much good may be done which others have to deny themselves, and this may be turned to power. He had felt this and had felt the comfort of it. It pleased him.

But——. All "buts" proceed from the person who has the disposal of the fortune. "Just as the congregation is subject to Christ——" Hush ! —Again he began to read, aloud this time : "An outer foundation for justification is therefore that Jesus has fulfilled the laws ; the inner condition is that the sinner believe this. However much God may be reconciled with the world, He can grant His grace to that sinner only who is attached to Christ through faith in Him as his Saviour."

The book was lowered, the minister was not

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conscious of what he was reading. There was a certain passage in Ephesians that made him pause. If the wife be not subject in all things, . . . now, just the fact of the wife having the disposal of her fortune, would sow seeds of dissent.

He was so firmly persuaded of this and could produce such convincing proofs, that he neither saw nor heard a thing, near or distant—except as though he were listening to another person's account of it. He drummed on the window-sill and looked down the road. Two newly awakened butterflies circling round each other above and below his window, had not the smallest idea of all the difficulties that can ensue when one has a fortune and not the disposal of it. A little further away, shaded by the boy's footstool which had stood there forgotten for some days, a graceful declytera with its thin stalk covered with little red bells, rang her wedding bells, a wedding without the slightest regard to the Epistle to the Ephesians, v. 24. Therefore it was overlooked by the minister. Not even the bees belonging to Nergard the gardener—up here perhaps for the first time this year (would they remember the way, now that the wind had changed and the scent of the flowers gave them warning)—not even the bees did he hear buzzing round the new blossoms shaded by the house. Matrimonial difficulties as regards Ephesians v. 24, can weave a covering for the head even though the sun's rays be shining on the hair. His eyes were blind as the wind itself as he let them wander over the town, yonder on the gentle slope, with its three shades

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of green, the meadows, the corn-fields, and the woods. Just at that moment there lay a long black stripe across the water, and some single wavy lines ; he was in the midst of it all, but saw nothing. A cow tethered over the way was lowing for water, water ! All around him seemed in a state of invisible expectancy . . . until the despairing cry of a child seemed to pierce the warm spring air, . . . one single scream. He seemed to hear each vibration, it was like a cutting hand laid on his chest ; he started up listening breathlessly for the next. Would it never come, that next scream ; the child must have disappeared after the first . . . no, there it is again. The first scream had been despairing, this next was horror itself, and the next one too and the following one ! . . . The minister stood there quite pale, with all his senses on the alert. He heard rapid footsteps across the sand to the right ; it was his mother who came to the gate between the two gardens ; she was a thin old woman, a black cap covering her chalk-white hair, which framed in a cautious and dry-looking face.

"No," exclaimed the minister, "no, God be praised, that is not Edward ; that flourish in the crying was not his ; no, there are no flourishes about him ; he bellows right out, he does !"

"Whoever it is, it's a bad business," answered she.

"You are right, mother," and in his heart he prayed for the little one crying so pitifully. But when he had done that, he gave thanks that it was not his boy, which was quite allowable.

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A tall man in light clothes and with a Stanley hat on, was walking up the road while this was going on. He kept looking at the house and garden; the minister looked at him too, but did not recognise him. He bent his way to that side of the road, straight up to the steps—a tall man with short, sun-burnt face, spectacles, and a peculiar rapid way of walking; but, in all the world? . . . The minister drew back from the window just as the stranger reached the steps, which he must have taken at a bound, for now there was a footstep in the passage. Then came a knock.

"Come in!"

The door opened wide, but the stranger still stood outside.

"Edward!"

The other made no answer. "What, Edward? you here! without first letting me know? Is it really you?" The minister advanced to meet him, gave him both hands and drew him in. "Welcome! dear old fellow, you are heartily welcome!" His face was red with delight.

Edward's sunburnt hands pressed those of his brother-in-law in answer, his eyes glistened behind his spectacles; but he had not yet spoken.

"Have you not a word to say, old fellow?" exclaimed the minister, dropping his hands and laying his on his shoulders. "Did you not meet your sister?"

"Yes, it was she who told me where you lived."

"And did you run and leave her? You wanted to get on quicker? I suppose the boy walked

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too slowly for you ? " asked the minister, his kind eyes looking into the other's with unmixed joy.

"That was not the only reason. What a pretty place you have here !"

"I am sure your house will be just as nice, although I would have preferred this north side of the town to the centre."

"But there was no choice left me."

"No, that is quite true. As you were going to buy the infirmary, you were obliged to buy the doctor's house as well; for they go together. Every one thinks it was very cheap. And convenient in every way, and a good deal of ground to it! What a long time you have been away! A long time at a stretch.—And why did you not write now, and let me know? Good heavens, how could I not know you directly? You are really almost totally unchanged." He looked at his brother-in-law's thin face, which seemed to have gained a milder expression. Then he went on talking. They walked up and down beside each other, sometimes standing together at the window. Then Edward turned to him:

"But you, Ole, you are not unchanged."

"Indeed! I thought I was. In fact, everyone says so."

"No, you have got something of a clergyman's manner about you."

"A clergyman? Ha ha! you mean that I have got stouter? I assure you I do everything a fellow can to prevent it; I work in the garden, I take long walks; but all to no purpose! . . . You see, my wife takes too good care

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of me. And every one here is much too good to me."

"You should do as I do."

"And what do you do?"

"I walk on my hands."

"Ha, ha, ha, on my hands? I, in my position?"

"In your position? If you walked up the church on your hands, that would be a nice sermon!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Can you really walk on your hands?"

"Yes, I say, I can." At the same moment he proceeded to walk on his hands; his short, loose tussore silk coat fell down over his head, the minister gazed at it and at the back of his waistcoat, and at the piece of shirt which showed between it and the band of his trousers, at part of the braces, and lastly at the trousers down to the stockings, and leather shoes with thick, gutta-percha soles. Kallem ran round the room in no time. Ole hardly knew how to take it. Kallem stood panting on his feet again, took off and wiped his spectacles, and began to examine the bookshelves closely in his short-sighted way.

The minister could distinctly feel that there was something the matter. Something must have put his brother-in-law out. Could his sister have said anything to wound him? No, dear me; what could it be? She who admired him so greatly? He would ask right out what it was; why not have it cleared up on the spot? Kallem had put his spectacles on and passed across to

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the desk ; a woodcut of Christ by Michael Angelo hung just above it ; he glanced casually at it, and then looked down at the open pamphlet lying on the desk. And before the minister was sufficiently recovered to ask any questions, Kallem said : " Johnsen's systematic theology ? I bought it at once at Kristianssand."

" That book ? You bought it ? "

" Yes, it was never to be had before. However, now it lay on the counter. It was just like a new landchart."

" Yes, it is not like Norway any longer," said the minister. " The most of it is nothing but impossible jurisdiction."

Astonished at the minister's answer, Kallem turned towards him. " Is this way of thinking general among the younger Norwegian theologians ? "

" Yes. I laid it there so as to find out tomorrow all the different opinions that exist on the doctrine of propitiation."

" Ah, I see, that is a capital plan." Again Kallem looked out of the window, for the fourth or fifth time. There could be no doubt that something was the matter.

" There they are ! " he said. He was standing at the furthest window, and Ole Tuft in front at the other ; from it he could see his wife's parasol above her muslin dress ; she was walking slowly, and held her little boy by the hand ; he was evidently talking incessantly, for his face was turned upwards towards her, whilst he jogged along the uneven road. They kept to the other

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side. But here, just by the hedge, a lady was walking. She raised her green parasol (what a beauty it was !). She was not as tall as Josephine, but slight; she was looking about and turned slightly ; she was fair, with reddish hair, and had a tartan travelling dress on ; it had a decidedly foreign cut ; she must surely be a stranger. It was not at all wonderful that Edward ran on in front ; he wished to be alone and leave them by themselves.

" Who can that lady be walking with Josephine ? Did she come by the same steamer as you ? "

" Yes, she did. "

" Do you know her then ? "

" Yes ; she is my wife. "

" Your wife ? Are you a married man ? "

He said this with such a loud voice that both the ladies looked up. In went his head into the room ; but nothing but vacant air met him there ; the doctor's head was still outside. It was from out there the answer came. " I have been married for six years. "

" For six years ? " Out popped the minister's head again and stared at Kallem with the greatest astonishment. Six years, he thought. " How long ago is it since ? . . . My dear fellow, it is scarcely six years since ? . . . "

The ladies were now close by ; the strange lady walking by the furthest hedge, while Josephine and the boy had crossed over to the other side. " I say, mother, why do little boys fall and knock their heads ? " No answer. " I say, mother, why don't they fall on their legs ? " No answer.

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"Because the upper part of the body is heaviest, my boy!" It was Kallem who said that. They all three looked up.

He left the window to go and meet them, the minister followed after; but he stopped at the bottom step.

The strange lady's eyes were full of tears when Kallem joined them; in vain she tried to hide it by looking about her on all sides. Josephine was cold and stiff. Little Edward ran up to his father and told him how Nicholas Andersen had climbed up the "ladder" (the boy pointed down to the new house) and "then fallen down." And "the new lady" had tied up his head with her handkerchief. This did not seem to interest the minister as much as the boy expected, so he ran round the house and in to tell his grandmother all about it.

"I suppose I need not introduce her?" said Edward Kallem, with his hand in his wife's and looking at the minister. The latter tried to find something to say, but failed and glanced over at Josephine, who did not look as if she were willing to help him.

It was hardly a week ago since the zealous minister had written condemning the numerous divorces that occurred, followed by fresh marriages; it was an article in the *Morgenblad* entitled "Marriage or Free-love?" And he had shown, by the most convincing proofs, that, according to the Scripture, the only ground for divorce was infidelity between man and wife. Whatever man could convict his wife of adultery, was free and could marry again; but if any man divorced his

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wife for other reasons and got married again during her lifetime, then the first marriage was valid and not the other one. Hardly a week ago he had written all this, and with the full consent of his wife. And just because this case of Kallem and Ragni Kule was still so fresh in his memory, he had written how the wife of a sick man had grown weary of the path in life chosen for her by God, and had had secret love-dealings with another man ; but as soon as it was discovered, she had left him and got a divorce. Supposing, he wrote, that that woman were to marry the man who had aided her in deceiving her husband ? who could call such a marriage as that aught but continued adultery ?

He had written it word for word. His wife entirely agreed with him ; beforehand, she hated the woman who had captivated her brother. And now they both stood there before her, and Ragni was her brother's wife.

This reunion could hardly have been more unfortunate. They had both been so certain that he was now quite steady. He was a learned man now, and had been offered a professorship ; he was in fact the one of all the younger doctors who was most thought of by the others.

This was a dreadful disappointment ! And think what it would be to live together with them and introduce them to their circle of friends in the congregation as Mr. and Mrs. Kallem ? after putting his name to a declaration that their marriage was not valid !

Of course Kallem must have read it, he who

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was so eager to keep up with the Norwegian bent of the times, that he actually read Johnsen's dogmas. . . . In all probability, he would first and foremost read the papers. He had read it, of course, and that explained all. There she stood, not knowing which way to look, but pressing closer to him. And he——? His right arm was round her, as though he wished to proclaim she was his. She held her parasol up in her right hand and persisted in trying to screen herself, but she could not bear it for long, she had to look for her handkerchief, and not finding her own, took possession of Kallem's.

Mechanically the minister said : " Shall we not go in ? "

They did as he wished. He showed them over the house, while Josephine went to get some refreshment ready. From the study, which looked into the garden, they went into the large drawing-room looking on to the road, into the drawing-room behind that again, and from there to the kitchen at the north side of the house, and to which there was a separate entrance ; on the same side was the larder, and a spare bed-room out to the garden, next to the minister's study, and with a balcony in front corresponding to the steps at the other end of the façade. Upstairs were several bedrooms, &c. It barely took five minutes to show them over the house. Nothing but a few necessary remarks on the part of the minister, and from Kallem a sneering allusion to the minister's occupying the spare bed-room, while Josephine was upstairs with her boy ; a similar

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speech later on, as he stood before a rare collection of celebrated theologians hanging round Luther's portrait on the largest wall of the room. He refused the refreshments Josephine offered them, said good-bye and went.

Ragni followed them about like an invisible being. As they were going away, her long, narrow, hand whisked through the hands of her brother and sister-in-law like an ermine through a hole in the wall. Her eyes glanced timidly at them like the shadow of a wing. The minister went out to the steps with them, Josephine remaining behind at the big window.

Kallem walked so quickly that Ragni was obliged to take a little hop at every third step; the minister stood and looked after them. This rapid walking increased her agitation so that, when they had got about half-way between the beach and the minister's house, she asked him to stop. She began to cry.

Kallem was surprised at this display of feeling so different to his own; he was very angry. But he soon understood that she was probably crying on account of his behaviour. He drew her up to the railing, and leaning his back against it, said: "Have I not acted rightly?"

"You were so cruel—oh, so cruel, and not only to him and to her, but to me too; yes, especially to me. You never looked at me, never paid the slightest attention to my being there."

"But, my dear, it was just on your account."

"Well, then I would rather go away again! I cannot bear that!" She threw herself in his arms.

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"My dear ! did you see what Josephine looked like ?"

"Of course I did," answered Ragni, and her head peeped up again, her hat falling off, and her hair tumbled. "She will kill me some day !" and again took refuge in his arms.

"Well, well," said he, "she will not succeed in doing you any harm. But am I not to fight your battles ?"

Forth she peeped again : "Not in that way ! I would never have thought you were like that ! It was so—so unrefined, Edward," and she took and shook him by the coat-collar.

"Listen to me," said he, quietly ; "what that fellow has written about us, that is unrefined. And her silence ? I thought that worse than anything he had written."

To this she answered nothing. After a pause he heard : "I am not suited for this."

He bent over her head ; her hat had fallen off, but they neither of them noticed it ; he whispered softly through her reddish hair ; she must not give in at once, nor speak of dying or going away again. "We must take it in a more manly way than that, don't you think so too ?"

"Yes, yes." Her rough head peeped out again : "But you must remember that now I am with you ; you cannot behave quite as if you were alone."

No, he quite saw that, and stood there with a guilty conscience.

At the same time Josephine was again in the

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room looking on to the road; there was only one window there, but a larger one than was usual, and she stood leaning her head against the window-post. The minister stood behind her. He considered it an untoward accident, his having written that in the *Morgenblad*.

"Your brother said he had been married six years?"

Josephine turned right round. But after she had thought the matter over, she only said: "Rubbish!" and turned to the window again. The minister thought too that it must be a mistake. They could not have been married before she was legally divorced.

"He was always acting a part," said he; "he took to walking on his hands." She turned towards him again, with eyes wide open with astonishment. "He walked right round the study on his hands," the minister assured her. "He advised me to walk up to the altar in that way. Well, as he even ridicules Luther, I ought certainly to be able to endure his ridicule."

She evidently did not wish him to speak of this meeting at the present moment; it caused her too much pain. He retired to his study, and looked anything but pleased whilst he was filling his pipe.

Josephine had reckoned so much on meeting and living with her brother. She would never listen to the slightest insinuation of a possibility of things turning out differently to what she expected. Perhaps her present suffering was wholesome for her.

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Had he himself acted rightly to-day? He certainly thought he had. He only hoped he would always be able to take things as meekly; he was quite certain this was not the last of it.

He enjoyed his pipe and took up his sermon again; but thoughts about Josephine would keep cropping up. He never could feel the same confidence in their married life as others had. She was irritable at times, and this last outbreak had been a bad one. Without doubt, because her thoughts had been entirely taken up by the expected visitor.

Hush!

"—— Conversion is a spontaneous proceeding, conclusive for ever. All our sins are washed away; we are as pure and holy in God's sight as Christ Himself!"

II

THESE two who had just made friends on their way down the road, walked on arm in arm.

Andersen, the mason, was standing on the scaffolding at the corner of the road and beach street ; he was a large man, with a long brown beard, and he had blue glasses on ; he was covered from top to toe with lime. He saw the fair lady again who had helped his little boy, and as she was walking arm in arm with the man with spectacles whom he had just seen go up yonder, he concluded it must be the new doctor ; the minister was his brother-in-law, and they were now coming from his house. Andersen left off working and took off his hat to them ; Ragni stopped her husband, and Andersen could remark she was saying something. He silenced the hammering and asked what the lady was saying ? She wanted to know if the little boy had fallen asleep ? Yes, he was asleep ; but they would be glad if the doctor would have a look at him when he awoke ; "for this is the new doctor, I suppose ?"

"You are right, it is he."

The people who were in the house came to the

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window at once, also, a few in the neighbouring house ; a passer-by stopped and stared at them, then moved on and told the tale all the way down the street. Andersen took the opportunity of mentioning his bad eyes ; the doctor would also have to look at them presently. As they walked on they had spectators from open windows and down the street ; they got many a greeting. They were young ; it did not require much to make them forget what had so recently happened, and they began to feel that they might live very comfortably here.

Amongst those who greeted them was a very young man with masses of hair, fair, arched features, slightly built, but tall ; there was something refined and rather shy about him. As they looked at him he blushed.

"By Jove ! you have made a conquest there," whispered Kallem.

Shortly after they met a very odd-looking fellow, slouching along in a knitted jacket, with a leathern apron in front ; dusty black hair, an unwashed face, indeed it was begrimed with dirt ; he was carrying some tools in his thin, narrow hands, which were appended to unusually long arms that swung in a kind of bow behind him ; had they swung both together they must undoubtedly have come into collision. He wore no hat, his short clipped hair showed the entire shape of his head. His forehead was neither broad nor high, but peculiarly well-shaped ; long in the jaw, with projecting bones. His small, cold eyes and tightly pressed lips gave him a cynical

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look. His nose was flat and small, and his chin pointed.

"Do just look at that man!" whispered Kallem.

"Disgusting!" she replied.

The man now passed close beside them, scanning them carefully. Kallem returned the glance, and when they had gone past they turned to have a mutual look at each other. An old woman came hobbling along.

"Who is that man?" asked Kallem. She looked at him and then at the man.

"It is Kristen Larssen."

"Is he a locksmith?"

"What kind do you say?"

"Locksmith!"

"Yes, he is. But he is also a watchmaker and gunsmith; in fact, everything you like."

The beach street was open to the sea, and without even a stone wall in front of it. Things lay rotting in the sea as also on land. There was an unfinished appearance about the whole town; a large house next to a small one, then a house built of stone, then a wooden one, all of them erected in haste and as cheaply as possible. The houses were not even in a line, the street was on the whole scarcely bearable. The people they met were neither town nor country folk, they were "wary but friendly," as Kallem said; "medium goods."

They had now arrived at the market-place, where the road turned up to the church, tall and graceful. It was here they had met Josephine on their way up; for up to the right by the church,

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in a park, lay their house with the garden in front ; they could, however, not see it from where they were.

The street divided just in front of the church, and continued to run on either side of it ; their home lay on the road to the right. As they came nearer the church, they could discern the park behind their own house, and in it the gables of the large hospital. At last—they were walking slowly, without uttering a single word—at last the large garden appeared, and their own house ! It was a large wooden building in the Swiss style, rather too broad, with big windows all open now.

Steps led down from the veranda to an open space strewn with sand. The flower-garden was nearest to this, then the kitchen-garden further on, and at the side, down toward the town, lay the fruit-garden, a very large one. The two owners looked at it simultaneously. Here it was ! For six long years had they each of them worked for this ; they had dreamed of it in various forms and ways, but never quite like this ; they had fixed it at many a place, but never just at this spot. Not one of all their dream-pictures was in what now lay before them ! They both turned and surveyed the breadth and beauty of the landscape, smiling the while at each other. It was strange that just at that moment there was not a creature to be seen, not a sound or a noise that recalled anything, either far or near. Just those two and their home ! The one saw exactly the same as the other saw, the sight and the feelings of the one

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were rendered more intense by the knowledge that the other shared them too. Ragni took her arm out of Kallem's, went over to the railing, which was of juniper branches, she reached through and gathered some grass and leaves ; she came back with this in her hand, and fastened it in his coat. He espied a tuft of cowslips further up, went and pushed his hand through, and gathered them ; she took them and gathered more ; it looked very pretty when there were many together.

At the side of the house and in the yard at the back, lay packing-cases, furniture, straw, sawdust, mats. Ragni's grand piano had just been taken out of the case and the legs screwed on ; but there was no one visible.

A large dove-cot stood out in the yard. "Fancy, if pigeons came flying here now ? We must keep pigeons !"

"But, fancy, if a dog came running to us now ? We must keep a dog !"

At this side there was no gate ; but on the road which divided the park and garden. They stopped there, and turned once more to look across the wide landscape.

Here, in this rich country, the richest and sunniest in all the land, their own home was to them as the centre of the compass. Ragni glanced across to see if the minister's house was visible from there ; but not a bit of it ! Kallem guessed what she was looking for, and smiled. Through the open windows they heard the work-people in the rooms ; they went down the veranda steps with much noise and laughter ; they came out

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there went and straight up to the piano, not noticing the two who stood there. Then they carried off the piano to the veranda and went tramping up the steps again. Kalle and Ragni looked behind at the park; there were beautiful tall trees, through the trunks of which one could see the hospital, a large wooden house built on a stone wall or foundation, and with large, many-paned windows. Then they went through the gate into the garden and down to their own house.

With the exception of one little outhouse on this near side, the building lay free on all sides.

The fruit-trees were just beginning to blossom, so it must be a sheltered spot. And the garden! Ragni never gave it a thought that this well-stocked garden was Josephine's work, she only looked forward to herself taking charge of it. The house needed painting; and it must have a different colour than this common looking yellow. It was *their* house, *their* home! Kalle stamped three times on the ground, it was his too. He wanted to go in there, but she wished to go round to the front and up the veranda steps. So they went round by the straw and packing-cases, and peeped in at the windows. The house was low in comparison with the length and breadth of it, the roof projected very much, lying heavily on the house. But that was a good thing.

The veranda was out of proportion, too, but it was broad, and the steps up to it were easy.

Arm in arm they walked up, but were met first of all by a disappointment; the entrance

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door, which was of glass, was not in the middle, but at the extreme end of the south wall of the room. But they soon saw that if the veranda was to be in the centre, it could not be otherwise ; to the right there were two more rooms leading out of the drawing-room. The men who had carried in the piano came out to meet them ; they understood at once who it was, and as Ragni looked at them, first the one, then all of them, took off their hat or cap. Kallem returned their greeting, Ragni escaped in to the piano which stood in the middle of the floor, took out the key and opened it, as if it had to be examined very closely and she must absolutely try if it had kept in tune. With her gloves still on, she struck the first chords of Longfellow's "Sweet Home." On hearing the first notes of this hymn to home, Kallem took his hat off. The others saw it, and supposing it to be a psalm, they did the same.

Ragni stood with her back turned, and did not therefore notice two people who came from the right—a man with a round, shining face, and behind him a little woman anxious to see and yet remain unseen. But then the door just in front of her was opened and a peasant girl looked quietly in, attracted by the sweet sounds. Ragni understood that it must be their servant come from the kitchen, and she went up to her.

"Are you Sigrid?"

Yes, it was she.

"Well, I am the doctor's wife."

"I thought so," said she, coming quite into the room. She was a stout, nice-looking girl.

"Is it the first time you are in service?" asked Kallem.

Yes, it was.

"And it is the first time we keep house," said Kallem; "it will be great fun!"

Ragni went out to the kitchen; there she saw their new dinner-service, which had just been unpacked and washed. She was not fit for more, so she went out into the passage and upstairs, to be alone. The door to their bed-room stood open just in front of her, she went in and out on the balcony over the veranda. How had she deserved such great happiness? What was all her longing, and all her work, compared to what now awaited her in a rich man's home? But there was a terror of something, through all this undeserved happiness. And here she again glanced over northward—was the minister's house visible from here? No, it was not possible to see it.

Josephine disliked her; she could feel it at once. And even if her brother thought it a shame—still he was very fond of his sister; there was something about her that he particularly admired; she was never mistaken in such matters.

Down below, Kallem went round the rooms. The two who had stood in the right-hand door had retired again, and the men were hard at work. It was a large room, there were windows in it that looked both to the church and the garden; but he thought he would propose to shut up the former. The walls were self-coloured, light grey, the ceiling pale blue with gold stars;

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the paint was old and faded, only the floor had been freshly painted, light grey too. The room to the left was still being papered. Goodness! were they not yet ready? Nor in the next room either? There were two people at work, the man and woman who had appeared in the doorway.

"Good-day!" said Kallem.

"Good-day!" came the answer from the round shiny face, with a Danish accent. Kallem went up to the table where the man stood cutting; the woman was standing beside, but now she sidled behind him.

"Is this your wife?"

"Yes, it is; and she is my assistant too; both wife and assistant; but for all that a proper kind of wife too." The little woman behind him giggled, though almost inaudibly. The man had prominent rolling eyes with a roguish twinkle in them.

"I fancied everything was ready."

"There are always hindrances to one's work, doctor."

She laughed heartily, but in a muffled sort of way.

"Is she Danish too?"

"No, she is Norwegian, but we get on very well together for all that."

She dived down deeper than ever, laughing continually.

The room they were in was oblong; Kallem saw directly that it was the dining-room; probably also the waiting-room for patients. The inner room, with windows both to the front and

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to the south-east, was of course his work-room he would receive people there when not at the hospital. He did not go into it, but out of the dining-room and into the passage again. To the right was the kitchen door. He was met by an array of beer-bottles on the kitchen dresser; some empty, some full.

"Whose are those bottles?"

"They belong to the saddler."

"To the paper-hanger, you mean?"

Then it dawned upon Kallem what kind of "hindrances" he had alluded to; and that he was quite tipsy at that very moment, and his wife still tipsier! That was why the men had been so long before they moved in the piano; they had been treated all round.

"Will you kindly ask the Dane to come to me here?"

The girl went directly, and directly too appeared the round, shining face with hundreds of twinkles in his eye; his wife was behind him, peeping out first at one side, then at the other.

"Are those your bottles?"

"Not altogether."

"Have you gone shares with the others?"

"Yes, in drinking them."

"But did you buy them?"

"Yes, I bought the beer, but not the bottles; they are to be returned."

The woman was heard to titter.

"May I ask what is your name?"

"Sören Pedersen, that's my name."

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"Look here, Sören Pedersen, will you let me buy the bottles of you?"

"Do you mean the beer?"

"Yes, the beer."

"All right, then."

"We shall have something, then, to drink to-night; for we must work all night, we must be ready to-morrow. We will help you with your work. Do you agree to that?"

"As you wish, doctor."

"Then will you kindly sup with us this evening?"

Then Kallem went upstairs in three-four strides; Ragni was out on the balcony, standing in the sun. She turned to him. He asked if she had finished her prayer? Yes, she was quite ready.

He, too, stood on the balcony, looking at the little islet at play beside the mother-island—it was visible from there—and the sea with its ripples, and the mountains yonder in distant grandeur. He looked over to the right, where the minister lived—she noticed it at once.

"They would never dare to treat us as though we were not married, eh? It will be amusing to see what they do!"

She drew him in and pointed to the colour of the walls in their bed-room; it was exactly as she had asked for it to be, white, a dull oil-colour. Everything was to be white up there except the long curtains and hangings draped from the ceiling down over both beds, at the balcony windows and before the door; they were blue in

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colour and pattern, and matched the ornamentations on the beds and the other furniture. Then she became very talkative ; but Kallem wanted to see the hospital, and she thought she would like to go with him.

The first thing he wished to have altered when they stopped in front of it, inside the park, was that several beautiful old trees, that were too close to it, should be taken away. The hospital was a two-storied house, painted yellow, with exceptionally large windows, but very small panes. The ground floor of the building was brick and contained the servants' rooms and offices ; it all looked very snug, with curtains in the windows and plenty of flowers standing in them. The entrance was at the left side of the house ; and there was a very large yard railed in by a high fence. Kallem was pleased to see a row of shady trees by the paling ; he knew that in about a fortnight he would have some American tents there for the use of the patients in summer-time.

The door was open, but no porter (concierge) to be seen ; in the window there were religious books and tracts for sale. There was no notice put on the door to say when the patients might receive visits. Presently they saw the porter in the inner yard ; he was an elderly man with a searching, solemn eye ; he had spectacles on, but looked over the top of them and took them off directly he had taken in who it was.

"Are you the new doctor ?"

"Yes."

Then he took off his hat too.

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"Welcome !"

The patient he had been talking to crept on before them ; he was pale and had a thick woollen scarf round his neck, even on that warm day ; he kept at a distance and did not bow. The porter accompanied them.

In the hospital there was a suite of rooms on each side of a light airy corridor, those to the front were large and those to the yard were small, both storeys were built in the same way. The porter was not only porter, but he was also steward, and the oldest inspector the house had ; he therefore felt called upon to introduce the other members of the household one by one as they met them. They were all respectable-looking people, both men and women ; there were two deaconesses among the latter, and they seemed the pleasantest of them all.

The first thing Kallem intended to do was to do away with the old-established typhus-fever rooms, and to build a separate typhus-pavilion for winter use. The operating-room was very light, but there must at once be a new polished floor put in. The ventilating apparatus was most faulty. With the exception of these and a few minor drawbacks—such as the small window-panes—it was a capital house, high rooms and roomy passages, and generally airy ; altogether he was well pleased.

The beds were pretty well filled, considering the time of year ; tubercular disease of the lungs, his special study, was represented by three individuals, two boys and a girl about ten years old,

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poor, thin, waxy-pale creatures, whom he looked forward to seeing in his American tent. The late owner of the infirmary, old Dr. Kule—an uncle of Ragni's former husband—was dead ; Kallem had bought it very cheap, because just at that moment there was no one else who could entertain the idea of buying. Here he would be able to arrange himself and his time exactly according to his own wishes ; he had great plans. The parish gave their contribution, and a committee, consisting of the district physician and one other doctor besides, had the supervision of it ; but he was entirely his own master. They were both of them quite delighted with this first visit. They went back to their own home in excellent spirits, but dreadfully hungry, took a bite of something in the kitchen and a glass of wine ; thought fit to drink an extra glass on account of the important event that they were breaking bread for the first time in their own house.

Everything in the drawing-room was topsyturvy ; but in spite of it Ragni made her way to the piano. She had often attempted translations from that foreign literature—it had been like her own for five or six years—especially translations of poetry. Slightly flushed with the wine, and just a little shy, she struck some chords—begging him not to stand before her—then again more chords, and with a small, gentle voice, she recited more than sang :

Here let us live !
May our friends and our fancies,
Our life's bygone chances
Flourish and grow—

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* In thoughts as in things,
In trees as in tones,
In voices, entwining
Around us.

Here may my heart
Through thee be laid bare
To myself and to thee
Who wert blind—
And joyfully, sinfully,
Gladden thee, wound thee ;
Though yearning with years
For a happy reunion
With thine.

END OF VOL. I

